

BENDED TWIGS AND STRAIGHT SAPLINGS.

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BENDED TWIGS AND STRAIGHT SAPLINGS.

BY MARIE OLIVER.

DAISY SAFFORD walked into the sitting-room quietly. She laid her music-roll in its accustomed place, and took off her little straw hat as absent-mindedly as she had put her gloves and parasol in the drawer of the old secretary.

The plainly-furnished sitting-room was very still. Somebody had been in, and with a careful hand had drawn the white muslin curtains closely, so as to shut out the hot sun. A vase of beautiful flowers stood upon the centre-table, while over the mantel sprays of luxuriant ivy fell and clambered about the tiny painting hanging just above it.

But Daisy took no notice of either vase or ivy. After she had put away her walking apparel, she went to the door leading to another apartment and called:

"Mother!"

A pleasant voice responded at once:

"Here I am, Daisy; what is it?"

Daisy went into the kitchen hastily. She sat down in the open doorway just where the rays of the sun fell, and looked up into the face of her mother, engaged with the week's ironing, pleadingly and longingly.

"O mother," she broke forth, at last, "I wish I could go away somewhere this summer! All the girls have been talking about going; some to the mountains, and some to the seashore. O dear! if I could only stay a few weeks by the salt water, I would be content."

"I wish you could, Daisy." The mother's face grew very tender as she looked on this one daughter. "It would delight my heart to have you go somewhere. It would do you a great deal of good, besides making you enjoy yourself; but I don't see how we are going to send you. You know it costs a great deal for board at such places, and we have already paid out quite an amount for your music lessons; though, to be sure, you have well improved your time. But perhaps things will be different sometime, darling; then you shall have those wishes gratified. I only wish you could now."

"O, well, mother!" Daisy jumped up from the doorstep quickly, and flung her

arms around the gentle woman's neck. "Don't fret about me. Perhaps it is wrong in me to think of such things."

"No, not wrong." The mother's hand smoothed the flushed face lying on her shoulder very softly. "No, not wrong; for you have not seen many shadows in life as yet. You are young, Daisy, and the fancies of youth are different from those of older people. If there were no aspirations, how few things would be accomplished! It is only wrong when we make ourselves miserable over them because they are not."

"I know that, mother; and I ought not to make myself uneasy about them; but really, sometimes when I hear the girls at school talking about this thing and that thing, it makes me wish I had it, too; and I don't see how I am to get them. I know I could appreciate the beautiful. The other day Alice Ford asked me into her house, and the servant showed me into her private sitting-room; and really, our parlor looks shabby beside it. The carpet is very fine, the piano elegant; and when I saw all the rare things, I wished—but there! of what use is it to wish? None at all." And Daisy paused very suddenly.

Mrs. Safford went on with her work quietly.

"Do you think that Alice is any happier than you, Daisy?" she questioned.

"No!" Daisy spoke very eagerly now. "She hasn't any father, or any brother. Her sister is very cold-hearted, and her mother fault-finding. O no! I don't believe she is as happy as I am."

Mrs. Safford exchanged her cold iron for a warmer one.

"Would you like to exchange places with Alice, Daisy?—she take your home, and you take hers?"

"No, I don't think I should," answered Daisy, hugging the big Maltese cat, then slyly basking in the sunlight which streamed across the floor. "I don't think I could give up my dear mamma for Alice's—and yet I should like the beautiful things which she has."

"I'll tell you what 'tis, Daisy," shouted a boyish voice in the yard just underneath.

the window by which the green hopvine grew, "you must get married, and then you'll have them."

The young girl glanced in the direction from whence the voice came, with a saucy shake of her head, while the dimples in her cheeks played at boopeep with those about her mouth. Then she laughed aloud merrily.

"O dear, Wallace! that is your remedy for everything," she cried. "You are always advising me to get married! One would think you were impatient to get rid of me, you naughty boy."

"But that's the only way you'll ever get your beautiful things," stoutly asserted Wallace; "for you well know that father can't afford such finery as Alice Ford has in her house."

Daisy dropped her pet kitten suddenly and stood up, a strange womanly glow upon her young face.

"I am very foolish," she said, the color in her cheek mounting higher. "One would think me a child, instead of a seventeen year old woman. No, no, Wallace! Don't look so frightened; you meant nothing, my boy; only pray don't ever again speak of my getting married, for I could not bear that. I love you all too well to ever think of leaving you. Besides, how could you ever get along without Daisy?"

"We couldn't do without her, anyway," said another voice; and Walter, the eldest son, entered just at that moment, with his arms full of hard wood for the blazing fire heating the huge irons. "No, no, Wallace! Don't you ever let me hear you speak of Daisy's going off, for when she goes, all our sunshine will go from us."

"And there will be no one then to mend my mittens, or hunt up my cap when lost, or play nurse for me when I am sick?" shouted the roguish Wallace; and off he rushed into the hayfields once more after his manly brother.

Daisy looked toward her mother with a meaning smile.

"How very poetical Walter is, and how matter-of-fact is Wallace!" she said, after a pause. "The former thinks of lost sunshine, the latter of losing his helpmeet; and yet both are good in their way. Do you think all boys are as good as ours, mother?"

Mrs. Safford dropped a kiss on the girlish cheek pressed against her ironing-board.

"No, not at all," she said, hastily; "in fact, but very few. Yet our boys are 'home-boys,' Daisy; they have never been exposed to temptation. But in distant cities I know that there is many a gambler, many a forger, and many a faint-hearted, black-souled murderer. You know but little of the world as yet, Daisy, and you ought to feel grateful that the knowledge of these things has been kept from you."

"O, I am, mother! But surely there ought to be some good people in the city; aren't there?"

"Why, certainly; we have many noble men and women, and might have many more, if they would only shun temptation. But, alas! a great many study fashion instead of themselves, and therefore make a blunder. Yet my little girl must grow up into a woman, and not into a butterfly of the world."

Daisy threw both arms about her mother's neck.

"O mother!" she cried, longingly, the tears for the moment rolling over her crimson cheeks, "if I were only sure of having your comfort during all my life, how blest I should be! How shall I ever get along without you!"

The mother's convulsive pressure told more than her lips, as she answered:

"Daisy! Daisy! is your faith so weak, my child?"

The young girl put up her trembling mouth for a kiss.

"I can seem to stand more when you are with me," she said, softly. "But I never, no, never, shall forget one of His promises."

"God bless you, Daisy!" And over that young head the mother breathed a heartfelt prayer for a moment, then quietly putting her from her, she went about her work again, both having been in a measure refreshed by that short conversation.

That night, just while Mrs. Safford was planning with her husband regarding Daisy's wish to spend a few weeks at the seashore, a letter found its way to the farmhouse. It came from the sister of the hard-working woman—came in all the pomp of fashion—to invite Miss Daisy on a sojourn to the grand old watering-place of B—.

This proud woman had happened to wed wealthy. Her husband, many years her senior, loaded her with every luxury, and had for some time forbidden her associat-

ing with her poorer sister, Mrs. Safford, on the plea that did she do so, she would demean her station in life. So, when the wealthy Charles Wilberforce bore away as his bride the beautiful Amelia Hastings, her sister cheerfully wedded Farmer Safford, and fancied that all intercourse between the two families had ceased, much to her sorrow.

Things went on in this way until the birth of the two little girls, namely, Daisy Safford, and her cousin Eva Wilberforce. Then it was a feeling of envy sprang up in the breasts of the two fathers. Mr. Wilberforce, as the years rolled on, showered blessings without number upon his child as her beauty increased, while Mr. Safford toiled early and late for his one daughter.

But owing to the influence of a fashionable, wordly-minded mother, Miss Eva grew into a vain, selfish young lady of seventeen years, while her cousin Daisy daily matured into what they had ever wished her to be—an earnest woman.

Therefore Mrs. Safford well knew her sister's passion for dress and fashion; so, when the letter came inviting Daisy to accompany Eva in her summer rambles, she hesitated. It was not because she could not afford it; dollars and cents were nothing to her then, for all of Daisy's bills would be settled by her aunt. It was not because the child would miss kindness, for Mrs. Wilberforce was kind in her way. The only objection lay in regard to the many temptations which ever follow the steps of the fashionable.

Eva had many beautiful possessions which Daisy had not, and would not the latter envy the former, despite religious teachings? So the mother reasoned, till finally she came to the conclusion that Daisy should decide for herself; and accordingly, the next day, put the letter into her hands, with a few kind words of advice. Girlish Daisy decided at once. A trip to the seashore was just what she had been wishing for; so with many a glad cry, she ran up stairs to begin her packing, and to decide how many new dresses she could afford to have.

Motherly Mrs. Safford accepted the bills her husband handed her with a little sigh.

"Father," she said, "I shall not get Daisy an expensive outfit. She will be content, I think, with little. Her own womanly dignity and grace must be her

only attractions. But I wish Amelia had not invited her, for I fear that being with Eva will have something of an effect upon her. Still, she may have changed during the past years. When a child she was self-willed, but perhaps she is now a graceful modest young girl; though of course she still retains her passion for dress."

"Graceful!" Farmer Safford elevated his nose a trifle higher than it was before, and then suddenly going to his wife's side, he held before her a tiny photograph of Eva, which had been sent with the letter. "See here! do you call this graceful? Look at the hump upon her back! Did nature form that? Look at the simper upon the proud lip! Is life made up of smiles and giggles? See the long hair tumbling down to her waist in curls and frizzles! Is that entirely natural? No! no! the twig is bent too much. The past years have done a great deal of faulty harm, but with care it would become a great sturdy sapling, after all. It only needs training and patience. I only wish, with all my heart, that she was more like our Daisy."

Mrs. Safford sighed. She was used to her husband's highfrown speeches. Rude and abrupt as they were at times, they always possessed sound sense and judgment, hitting the point at once, and letting his neighbors know just the ground whereon he stood.

The likening Miss Eva to a bended twig had often been repeated when alone with his wife. To her it was no new idea; and as she now looked upon the pictured yet soulless face of her only niece, she felt that her husband's comparison was not far out of the way. But she did not offer to venture a remark concerning Eva. She well knew Farmer Safford's opinion of her, and did not wish to enlarge upon the subject; but the good man was not quite ready to relinquish it. He only got up from his chair, and going to a private drawer in the old secretary, he took from thence a small photograph of Daisy, and laid it down upon the table beside the other.

"See there!" he said, holding both so his wife could see without the trouble of rising. "My Daisy has got more gumption in her little finger than Eva has in her whole body; and I am not afraid but what she will come out far ahead of her yet. No matter if Wilberforce does think his

child perfect, he may see the day she will be obliged to beg from mine; for Daisy can be a lady, and I trust we shall yet see her an earnest true-hearted woman. Bah! I hate your tiny twigs. They bend too easily to suit me. I want a straight sturdy sapling, strong to endure the blasts of sorrow and the winds of adversity. So take away the picture, wife. I'll keep it, of course, so long as she sent it to me; but I wonder why it is women will deform themselves so? If nature had done it for them—if she had hung straggling curls over their eyes, and twisted ornaments in their ears; had bent their feet into a bow, and forced them to carry a hump upon their backs—what a cry they would raise! But so long as it is only the fashion to do these things, it is all right. So they go on; and I say, if women insist upon being fools, instead of what God made them, namely, women, it is none of my business! I can afford to laugh at them; but *my girl shall be different.*"

And having finished his excited speech, Farmer Safford went into the little bedroom leading off the kitchen, and shut the door...

So the days passed on. Daisy's trunks had long been packed, waiting the arrival of her aunt and cousin; and now she found herself, before she could realize it, in the spacious limits of B— Hotel.

As usual, Mrs. Wilberforce promised herself a gay season. She was naturally of a lively turn of mind, and as her greatest passion was dress and admiration, she was not at a loss for company, or for invitations to certain rounds of pleasure.

Daisy had been asked to accompany her, because, to use her own words, she really pitied the poor child. A farmhouse was a terrible place to bury one's self in, and her little niece, when last she saw her, had given promise of great beauty. So in order to please her, she had sent for her.

Then Miss Eva, like her mother, was very gay. She had a large share of good looks, a fact she had known from babyhood; and therefore she never troubled herself to learn anything else. From her cradle she had been clothed in the richest of garments, and had had idle compliments poured into her ears from the many young swells of her day; so it was no wonder that life to her seemed as a pleasant picture, for she had not as yet seen the wrong side.

But though from the depths of her heart

Mrs. Wilberforce felt the contrast between her own child and the child of the farmhouse, she would not acknowledge her better feelings, and on the day of their arrival at the hotel, took care to present Daisy to all her friends as the daughter of a very eccentric sister.

Yet there was no need of that, for Daisy, without any effort on her part, attracted her share of attention. Her sweet earnest face and glad young eyes drew more than one glance; while her courteous way of granting or accepting a favor, gained her many friends.

Yet Mrs. Wilberforce was not contented with this only, for she had a plan in view; in fact, she had taken that summer trip for the purpose of making a conquest for her daughter, and, if possible, for Daisy, as well. Both girls were old enough to be married, and of course, being only children, they must marry well. Mrs. Wilberforce was a person of great determination; so when she met the two friends Kirkland Vane and Harry Prince at the spacious hotel, she at once improved her opportunities, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the four young people conversing like old acquaintances.

Towards Eva Harry Prince preserved a warm affection. The gay butterfly was very tempting to the man of the world; while on the other hand, the womanly nature of Daisy won for her the respect and admiration of Kirkland Vane.

Then Mrs. Wilberforce was almost sorry she had introduced her niece, for the latter gentleman was most decidedly the best catch of the two, and she had rather have had Eva claim his attention, he was so perfect and noble.

This she whispered to her daughter one evening, as they were preparing for a stroll on the beach by the light of the moon; and accordingly the obedient young lady brought all her blandishments to bear upon Vane. Her dress of heavy crimson silk she made to trail more gracefully over the white sands; the golden curls fell still lower on the white shoulders gleaming beneath the carelessly arranged folds of her shawl; and she was exceedingly afraid of venturing too near the swiftly inrolling breakers, lest she might spoil the bronze boots encasing the pretty feet.

Poor Daisy watched her like one bewildered. Her own dress was thick and wa-

terproof. She wore a thick sack and heavy boots, neatly fitting. She was afraid neither of the waves nor of the spray, for she required no curl-papers to keep in check the soft brown hair waving about her neck and shoulders. Therefore she looked on curiously; and when a tiny shriek of fear from her cousin's lips brought both gentlemen at once to her side, she said she could take care of herself; and so went on quietly, wondering why it was that Eva allowed both to support her, when it was such splendid walking.

At a little ways from the hotel, however, they sat down to rest and to watch the play of the waves upon the shore. Eva leaned against a slender birch tree branching out from the rock on which she was sitting; and finally shivered, and drew her shawl close about her, as if afraid of the dampness.

"Ugh!" she said, "I wonder how the proprietors of the hotel can allow this miserable old stump of a tree to stand. It just spoils the view from those upper windows; and yet I am told that if trained, it could be made quite an addition to the beach. But it is scragged enough now," she added, drawing further away from it.

"It is its neglect which makes it unlovely," replied Kirkland Vane, laying his hand beside Daisy's, as it rested in its purity upon the despised tree. "A little care, however, might, old as it is, make it a straight sapling like its mate over yonder."

"And that is so beautiful!" cried Daisy, the moonbeams playing boopeep in the little dimples hovering about her sweet mouth. "But, Eva dear, you seem chilly; you are shivering. Hadn't we better return to the hotel?"

"O no! pray don't on my account," cried Eva, as the others arose; "I do very well. Besides, the night is lovely."

But Daisy, seeing her lips tremble, insisted, and so they followed her advice; while as the two girls bade them good-night in the lower hall, and like warm living sunbeams vanished up the winding stairs to their room, Kirkland Vane felt better and purer for that half hour spent in the society of Daisy Safford.

"By Jove, Kirk!" cried the impulsive Harry, as the two entered their own apartment, next to the one occupied by Daisy and Eva; "what a difference there is between Miss Wilberforce and her cousin, Miss Safford. I never would have believed

that two of a family would be so unlike."

Kirkland Vane turned from the pages of the book he had taken up on their entrance, and looked up at his friend, a proud enthusiasm lighting up his noble features.

"You've spoken the truth, Hal," he said. "And now, between you and me, I feel quite rested since my short acquaintance with Miss Safford. It is quite refreshing to meet with a true woman once in a while, after playing the agreeable to so many uselessly-gotten-up belles of the present century."

"Refreshing!" cried Harry, starting from his chair in astonishment. "Kirk Vane, what a fellow you are! Now what you see in that country girl is more than I can tell. Why, she isn't to be compared to Miss Wilberforce! *She* dresses elegantly. Why, her costume to-night must have cost a small fortune. Did you not notice it, old fellow?"

"No," replied Kirkland Vane, now speaking quite plainly, as his companion's meaning flashed across his mind. "No, I did not notice it. But, Hal, to tell you the truth, these two cousins remind me quite forcibly of those two trees we were conversing about this evening. Miss Eva is the bended twig; made so, perhaps, through the influence of a worldly-minded mother. Her intellect is warped, and all her finer qualities smothered; though with careful training in childhood, she might have become a perfect young lady. On the other hand, Miss Safford has had judicious management, which has made her just what she is. A free life in the country has brightened her intellect, and stored her mind with useful knowledge. She is retiring, yet not prudish; she is reserved, yet friendly; and I can say my life has been made happier and purer by her friendship."

And with that remark, Kirkland Vane resumed his book, while Harry, after idly selecting a cigar, went out upon the balcony to enjoy it alone, highly incensed at what he termed his friend's foolishness.

Meanwhile, in the adjoining chamber, occupied by Eva and Daisy, an exciting conversation was being carried on, and the loud voices were distinctly heard by Kirkland Vane, without any effort on his part; therefore he laid down his book, and fell to dreaming, eager to hear, and yet despising himself for the part he was acting.

Mrs. Wilberforce had visited her daugh-

ter before retiring, and on finding the rich dress worn by her on the beach that evening ruined by the damp sands and wet spray, had given vent to her indignation in tones which could not be misunderstood.

"It is a perfect shame for you to do so, Eva Wilberforce!" she cried, excitedly. "I can't afford to replace such garments fresh every evening during our stay. You have already ruined several, and now this beautiful dress isn't fit to be seen. You must put it in your trunk, and we will give it to Nora when we get home. Careless girl! I wish you were well off my hands! You've thrown away all your chances, and now bid fair to let these two good matches slip through your fingers, without striving to secure either one or the other. You really must try, Eva! You are old enough, and Kirkland Vane is a man any woman might well be proud of. Why don't you encourage him, child?"

"I would, mamma," returned Eva, coolly, as she replaced a loose curl-paper, "only I think he fancies Daisy instead of me; and you see I don't wish to interfere."

Mrs. Wilberforce looked astounded.

"Daisy Safford," she cried, "is this the way you return all my kindness? Recollect my daughter is the eldest, and therefore must have the first chance in society. Besides, Kirkland Vane must think your conduct very unlady-like, if you have forced yourself upon his notice," she added, coldly.

Daisy lifted her head from the pillows, where she had been lying watching Eva, and the red flush settled all over her cheek and forehead.

"Auntie! Aunt Millie! I have never in any way tried to attract the attention of either gentleman; please believe me!" she cried, piteously. "I do, however, respect both; yet neither is in my estimation perfect. Mr. Prince is fond of company and of pleasure; but he is passionate and unprincipled. Kirkland Vane is also gentlemanly and tender, but he is proud of his handsome form, and of his mellow voice. And now, Aunt Amelia, if I have stood in Eva's way, I am very sorry; but I did so unknowingly; and I have no desire to be other than what I am—a woman, tender and true."

Then Daisy faltered. Mrs. Wilberforce left the room angrily. Eva went on with the task of curling her hair as if nothing

had happened, occasionally comforting Daisy, who lay sobbing among the pillows; and in the next room Kirkland Vane was biting his lips as he recalled Daisy's judgment concerning his pride of form and voice.

After that he went out to find Harry, and told him the whole story; but that young man was blinded to the faults of Eva Wilberforce. He saw naught but her virtues; and taking it for granted that if he wedded her he should step at once into ease and plenty, he proposed, was accepted, the time for the marriage set, and in two days after Mrs. Wilberforce and her party returned homewards.

Kirkland Vane took Daisy's honest hand in his to say good-by.

"Miss Safford," he said, "you have helped to make me a better man. I shall call upon you sometime. Tell me if I shall be welcome?"

"My friends are always welcome," was the unflinching reply; and Daisy went back to the farmhouse.

The following winter Eva wedded in grand style; and after the display was over, Kirkland Vane surprised them all by visiting the farmhouse often. Walter and he became firm friends. To Mr. Safford he was ever respectful. So when at last he asked for Daisy, the good farmer gave her up proudly.

"You come of good stock," he said, kindly. "My Daisy is a dear child. She has ever been a dear daughter to me, and she will make you a good wife. Take her, my boy, and deal by her as a priceless woman should be dealt by."

Thus it was Daisy Safford left the farmhouse. She went to a spacious home of her own, filled with the beautiful things she had so often longed for; and there she held her fair head up proudly, ever the firm friend of all who trusted in her.

Eva also maintained her way for a while, but owing to repeated extravagances her husband failed; Mr. Wilberforce refused to harbor an idle man, and so the proud couple made their way in the world with the cheerfully given aid of Daisy and her husband; while Eva, remembering the rock on which her own and her mother's bark had gone down, ever afterwards taught the little ones committed to her care to grow into straight saplings, and beware of bended twigs.

BEN'S BLUNDER.

BY O. S. ADAMS.

I.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER.

IT was a pitiless night without. The wind blew in angry insane gusts, the rain poured down relentlessly, and the sleet fell like the slashes of a thousand cutlasses. Men went along with their heads bowed and thrust forward to cut their way through the storm, children slunk under the shadows of doorways and awnings, and women—well, what few there were out—drew themselves up into drenched shivering masses, and hastened to the shelter of their miserable homes. I say miserable homes, for none but poor women, whose homes were miserable, were out, impelled by dire necessity, braving the fearful night.

But all was cosy in the editorial rooms of the "Morning Gazette." Climb a flight of steep narrow stairs, pass through a long dark hall, and you will run plump against a door. Open this, and you will be greeted with the cheerful warmth of a good coal fire, the subdued glimmer of gaslights turned down, the odor of meerschaums lying about, and an atmosphere rendered sociable by hundreds of newspapers scattered on the tables, which have brought words of cheer, comfort, defiance, exhortation, invective, philosophy and humor from brothers in the craft miles and hundreds of miles away. Now the room is deserted. An hour hence it will be blue with smoke, musical with the click of scissors and the rapid travelling of pencils, and teeming with material to be worked up into news for the edification of an expectant public.

Ben Durfield came sauntering in and sat down to his table. But instead of going about his work in his usual brisk manner, he appeared sullen and moody. He sharpened his pencil slowly, letting the shavings fall on the paper before him, and then leaned his elbows on the table and rested his face in his hands.

"Am I a fool, or is she—or am I not?" he muttered, not daring to whisper even to himself the dreadful suspicion that his lips were on the point of uttering. Doubt,

hope, desolation and anger flitted by turns across his face. Plainly, some great mental distress agitated him.

Ben was "night editor" on the *Morning Gazette*. It was the poorest paid, although not the least responsible position on the paper. The latest telegraph despatches passed through his hands to be revised, dressed up and put in presentable shape; the last proofs were read by him, and the last stirring incisive "double-leaded" paragraph on some important piece of news, often emanated from his ready apt mind.

Soon a brisk step was heard approaching through the hall, which Ben recognized as that of Mr. Crawford, the editor-in-chief. This aroused him. He arranged his papers, turned up the gas, lit his pipe and went to work.

"Evening, Dur," cheerily. Mr. Crawford always called Ben by the first syllable of his last name.

"Good-evening," replied Ben.

"What are you at?"

"Just going to finish itemizing the afternoon report."

"Isn't that done yet?" with a tinge of asperity.

"Nearly," answered Ben, shortly.

Mr. Crawford was a tall, black-whiskered, keen-eyed, fine-looking man, with a genial face and an air of downright good-fellowship. He stared at Ben a moment, his nostrils worked as if he sniffed something amiss, and then he turned away.

Ben was nervous all the evening, working by fits and starts, and at intervals subsiding into momentary gloom. The local editor was out most of the time, and Mr. Crawford's assistant was too absorbed with his work to notice this. But Mr. Crawford himself noticed it, and watched for an opportunity when they were alone to speak to Ben. Meanwhile he reflected, cast stolen glances at him, and pondered on the best manner of approaching him.

"Dur," he said, when the favorable moment arrived, "I'd give a good deal if I had a pretty little wife like yours, and a home made bright by her presence."

Ben looked up. A momentary gleam of

pleasure shot across his face at hearing his wife praised. But a cloud came instantly, and a look of cynicism settled on his countenance. He said, with a short laugh:

"Don't build air-castles, Mr. Crawford. All wives don't make their homes glad."

"Ah, but yours does," said the editor, earnestly. "One would know that to look into her lovely face and sparkling eyes. Your wife has a splendid eye, Dur."

"Yes, I know it," said Ben, grimly.

"But—you won't be offended, will you, at a word of advice?"

"No; what is it?" Ben looked at Mr. Crawford sternly and searchingly. His voice was harsh and his face was miserably eager.

"There's Champton, you know. He's a respectable old cove, but he has a failing. It's a hankering after pretty women. And he has looked very admiringly at your wife—"

"You've noticed it, have you?" said Ben, in a cold icy voice.

"Yes; but what the d—l makes you stare at me so? I haven't made any charges—there's no reason that I know of to make any. Only it might compromise her, you know, to call at his private office and have him go to see her."

"Yes, yes—you're right. But you don't believe—" Ben stopped and looked up imploringly.

"No, no—of course I don't. Thunder! you needn't look at me so worried. I only meant to remind you of old Champton's weak point. Your wife's an angel. And I repeat that I wish I had one like her. But I'm an old bach, and suppose I am destined to be one forever. Heigho! perhaps it's better as it is."

Ben looked at Crawford and wondered if he meant more than he said. But the latter had fallen into a reverie, on coming out of which he turned to his work. Then the other editors came in, and forthwith all were busy.

Hours passed without a word being spoken save an occasional brief question and briefer answer, and the reading of bits of proof in a low humdrum tone. As for Ben, he applied himself to his work with such an intense energy that he forgot for the time being his trouble.

About one o'clock Mr. Crawford said:

"Dur, the proof of my leader hasn't come down yet. When it does, I wish you

would read it. I don't feel very well, and would like to go to bed. If anything important comes in the last report, just touch 'em up on it in a dozen lines or so."

Ben promised, and Mr. Crawford departed. After a while the other editors left also, and Ben was alone. But he had plenty to do with telegraph despatches to revise and proofs to read. About three o'clock his work was done, and he put on his overcoat preparatory to facing the storm and making his way home. Just as he was about leaving, the foreman came running up and said:

"Mr. Durfield, I think there must be some mistake in this last proof."

"I've read it once, haven't I?" demanded Ben.

"Yes."

"Well, then, I know my own business."

"But this—"

"Go to —!" Ben used an expression that he wouldn't have used in his right mind, and rushed out, leaving the foreman standing in amazed anger.

"By George, he shall have his own way!" muttered the latter functionary.

Ben made his way through the darkness and the rain, which was now freezing as it fell, to his own house. He entered by means of a nightkey, and stepped softly, as he was wont to do, so as not to wake the children. One lay in the cradle, a golden-haired three-year-old girl, and the other, a baby boy, was in bed with its mother.

"What is their innocence to give place to one of these days?" thought Ben.

He walked through into the kitchen, hung up his dripping coat, and then, returning, sat down in the big armchair by the fire and thought.

"The mortgage is due day after tomorrow," so ran his musings, "and Nell hates me because I haven't the money to pay it. Good God! what wont poverty drive one to? To think that she should—no, I'll not even think it yet. But what a train of circumstances there are! Nell acts so different lately—looking at me with questioning eyes, and evidently trying to conceal something. What was in the note she received yesterday? She trembled when the boy handed it to her, and glanced around at me to see if I was watching. And then there is old Champton. He has called here, and she has been to his private office. O, what a misery of doubt!"

"I can't tell her, for if I am wrong, it would be a terrible insult to her. She shall not be accused falsely from her husband's lips. I must watch alone and unaided, for if she is true, she shall never know that I doubted her.

"As for the mortgage, I don't suppose there is any possibility of doing anything about it. The place must go, and poor Nell will have to give up her home. To think that I can't make her happy enough to keep her to me!"

Ben groaned, and a single bitter tear fell, which he dashed away with stern impatience.

Then he took off his boots and softly entered the bedroom. Nell was sleeping soundly, though her cheeks were flushed and her face was anxious in its look. Ben stepped to the bureau. He put up his hand to take off his cravat, when something arrested his movement. Out from Nell's private drawer stuck the corner of a white envelop. He gazed at it a moment, hesitated, and then, with a look of resolve, drew it carefully out. Stepping into the sitting-room again, he examined its contents. Who shall describe his face as he read the following:

"**MY DEAR MRS. DURFIELD**,—I could not possibly see you this evening, but I will call at nine o'clock to-morrow forenoon. As your husband will not have risen, he need not know of our interview. I hope then that the final arrangements can be perfected. The trains do not yet run regularly, so it is difficult to make calculations for the next few days with any degree of certainty. However, perhaps we can agree on some arrangement. Had you not better burn this? With regard,

"**ISAAC CHAMPTON.**"

Ben read this twice with a ghastly rigid look. "Very cunningly worded," was his mental comment, "but it doesn't deceive me!" Then he took hold of it as if to tear it, but, recollecting himself, refolded it and thrust it in the drawer again. Then he looked at the bed. Nell was still sleeping, her beautiful face upturned, unconscious of his presence, and her lips parted in a smile. Was she dreaming of guilty revels and stolen pleasures? Ah! the thought nearly overcame poor Ben, and with a smothered gasp of anguish he left the room.

A look of sorrowful, desperate resolution was settled across his face, and he began to draw on his boots again. That done, he put on his overcoat, wet, heavy and cold as it was, and, pulling his cap down over his eyes, opened the door noiselessly and stole out again into the storm. Although it was almost morning, it was still pitch dark. After listening at the door a moment to assure himself that Nell had not been awakened, he turned fiercely away from the house and made his way at a mad pace through the streets, from which nearly all human beings had fled. On he went, regardless of the fury of the storm, his heart tortured and pierced with jealousy and despair, his brain in a whirl—reckless, desperate, blind. The cold reached his inmost fibres, the rain wet his garments, and the sleet cut his haggard face. Yet none of this did he heed—none of it did he feel—he only went on, on, further off—anywhere to escape from the anguish that tortured him.

He must have had some half-conceived plan of shooting Champton, for he stopped at a grogshop, took a glass of brandy, and requested the loan of a pistol.

A coarse laugh, and "You'd better go home and go to bed," was the only reply he got.

Then he plunged again into the gloom and resumed his insane tramp. He knew not where he went; madness blinded his reasoning powers. Many and devious were the byways through which he turned, until finally he was on the outskirts of the city, staggering and stumbling along, his mad purposeless energy nearly gone. At last, completely exhausted, he fell his full length on the ground, and did not rise again. It was rapidly growing cold, and the sleet had changed to icy snow.

May the good Father protect him, for he is lying across the railroad track, and the morning express will soon leave the city!

II.

HONOR BRIGHT.

MRS. DURFIELD was a handsome woman, there was no mistake about that, and she had a splendid eye, as Mr. Crawford had said. Moreover, she was full of energy and life, and by her bright ways and industrious arts made her and her husband's home a little palace of quiet con-

tentment. They were blessed with two lovely children, and only one thing interposed to prevent their complete happiness. That was the mortgage. It was held by Isaac Champton, mentioned in the conversation between Ben and Mr. Crawford.

Old Champton, as he was called, was a hard-fisted individual, although he was not particularly "old." But that appellation often fastens itself to those who incur contumely and censure by grinding down others, and living a life devoted to money-getting. He never relented when he had a man once in his power; his grasp did not relax until the last condition in the bond was satisfied. He was never liberal—never—except where a pretty woman was concerned. Need more be said except that he was a bachelor, not bad-looking, and with a reputation none of the best?

Ben had asked him over a week ago if the time for the coming payment could not be extended, but had received in response a cold negative. He had nothing to do then but to doggedly let matters take their course. And what business had Nell to be so gay when his own heart was heavy, chagrined and exasperated? And above all, why should she hold secret correspondence and stolen interviews with the miserly wretch who was to turn them out of a home?

You won't get an answer, Ben, by running away and fleeing from the phantom conjured in your own jealous brain!

Nell awoke toward daylight, and was at first startled at not finding Ben by her side. She sprang from the bed. But when she heard the howling wind without, she thought, "No wonder he didn't come—such a fearful night! He must have slept at the office."

And when the little girl in the crib stirred and called, "Papa! Mamma?" she said, "Bessie won't see papa until lunch-time to-day. Won't Bessie and mamma be lonesome?"

Perhaps all readers may not be aware that night editors have to sleep forenoon, their business keeping them up till the early hours of morning. Nell was accustomed to arise early, however, and when Ben made his appearance toward noon, to get a lunch for him. This will explain Mr. Champton's mention, in his note, of seeing Nell before her husband should arise.

Despite some anxiety, she went about her household duties with her usual briskness, confident that Ben would be home at noon. And for the time being all thoughts of Mr. Champton's expected call were driven away. So when that gentleman arrived she was the least bit confused, and met him with pink cheeks and fluttering heart.

"Good-morning, Mr. Champton."

"Good-morning, Mrs. Durfield."

He was a tall, broad-shouldered, erect man, with slightly curling hair, grayish-black side whiskers, and a countenance of rigid lines. He had cold, calculating blue eyes, which were forbidding in their expression, but which would not have been half so much so on this occasion had he not cast a bold glance of admiration on Nell.

"Upon my word! You are looking charming this morning, Mrs. Durfield," he said.

"Sir!" said Nell, looking up in surprise.

"Indeed you are!"

"Will you walk in, sir?" she asked, turning her face from his, and leading the way into the parlor.

He followed, and having taken an armchair, looked at her inquiringly.

"Your husband—?"

"My husband is not in the house. He did not come home at all last evening."

"O, so much the better. We can proceed to business without fear of interruption."

He paused and looked at her with the same hateful leer on his face that he had assumed on entering. Nell was embarrassed, and did not know what to make of the proud dignified man's extraordinary display of suavity. But as he waited, evidently expecting her to speak, she said:

"Well, sir, the money is due to-morrow, and you told my husband you must have it."

Mr. Champton bowed.

"We have not saved anything out of his salary this year, but I thought we might be able to arrange it if I could have a talk with you."

Again the insinuating smile.

"I think I should have had the money by this time if it had not been for the storm and the delay of the mails. There has not been anything from New York for three days, has there?"

"Four," answered Mr. Champton.
"And I am afraid it will not come in time."

"It probably will not."

"But I thought, perhaps, you would wait—a week, even—when you knew it would be here in all probability within that time."

"I never wait, Mrs. Durfield."

"No, but—"

"Unless there is an object in so doing," he added, significantly.

"An object?" wonderingly.

"Yes—an inducement."

"O sir, will not the consciousness of having performed a kind act be a sufficient inducement?"

"Mrs. Durfield, you mistake my meaning." His tone now trembled slightly. "You cannot have failed to notice that I have admired your bright face and sparkling eyes. Whenever you have called on me, or I on you, your presence has seemed like a ray of sunlight—"

"Mr. Champton!"

"Your beautiful mouth seems loaded with tempting kisses." He drew his chair nearer to hers. "How often have I wished that some of them might be for me. O Mrs. Durfield, your beauty draws me to you with a fascination I cannot resist!"

"You forget yourself, sir!" Nell exclaimed, looking at him in amazed indignation.

"O no, I do not! My money is at your command if you will only be mine. Durfield will be in blissful ignorance, the mortgage shall go on, and pleasure shall be ours."

Nell arose with a blazing face, and eyes darting lightning flashes of wrath.

"Sir, I despise you and your money! I have a husband—do you understand?—and he prizes my honor more than all the mortgages in Christendom! Sell myself! No sir! We will work together, and dig our bones bare, and trust in each other!"

She paused, out of breath and with heavy bosom. Brave wife! Cowardly villain! Ben, could you see the scene, would you not feel like a very sneak?

Mr. Champton grew pale with rage. He avoided the clear eyes, shooting glances of reproof into his own, but did not quite give up.

"Remember the alternative, Mrs. Durfield," he said, "your husband is a hard-

working man, and it would go hard with him to have the place sold. Think of the trouble it would take off his mind to have the payment extended. You could live here so happy and comfortable, and the price—he would never know it."

The moneyed tyrant rose with a manner that said "consent, or expect no mercy from me."

"You do not know me nor my husband," said Nell, with imperial dignity. "You cannot appreciate love nor honor. You had better go!"

"Ha! that is the way you talk, is it? Well, I am a man of few words. You have heard, and doubtless understood me. It seems I have been mistaken in you. Of course it will be as much for your interest as mine not to repeat this conversation. You have doubtless given your answer with a full understanding of the consequences that are to follow. If the payment is not made to-morrow the mortgage will be immediately foreclosed."

"That is your decision, is it?"

"That is my unalterable decision."

"Well, then, we can only wait, trust in God, and hope for the best. Since you are determined to be our enemy, I repeat that you had better go."

Nell was very calm, now, very stern also, and her words were cutting. The man whom she thus dismissed must have felt like an abject slave in his moral degradation, as he received his withering repulse. But he walked down the street as stately as ever, rejoicing in the miserable pride that money gives—in the arrogant power it confers on unworthy possessors. And he determined to use it now relentlessly.

As for Nell, when her first burst of indignation was over, she wept silently and bitterly over the misfortune that hovered over her and Ben. They loved each other well, were toiling together in sweet contentment, and now they were to be robbed of their all, and turned into the world to commence anew again.

Still there was one hope. If the good steam horse could brave the storm and plough his way through the great white drifts, he would indeed be a friend in need. For that would bring the one thing needful now—the money to pay the mortgage. Yes, there was a short time left—thirty hours or so—for the means arising to avert the impending calamity. And Nell waited.

striving to hope for the best, and sorrowfully solicitous concerning Ben.

Meanwhile, turn we to the office of the *Morning Gazette*. It is past noon, and Mr. Crawford, the editor, enters the office with a scowl on his face. He holds a copy of the *Gazette* in his hand, crumpled up in a fierce grip. He sits down and reads something in a particular corner of the paper. It is plain that he has read it before, and that he is greatly exasperated in consequence. But he is evidently re-perusing it in order to take in all its enormity of vexatiousness.

I am afraid he uttered an oath or two, if not more, and so it is not worth while to record what he said. But what editor wouldn't feel enraged, to rise up in the morning and see the following paragraph in bold letters under the editorial head of his own paper?

"Another great battle! Victory for the Union Arms! All will rejoice at the news in this morning's telegrams. Our forces at South Gap have routed the rebels like chaff before the wind. There was considerable slaughter and many prisoners were captured. Some of the rebels had evil designs on the wives of the Federals, but their nefarious designs were frustrated. Honor makes aright!"

What could it mean? Durfield had been left in charge the night before, as on many previous occasions, and had never committed a blunder of importance. But here was something that would bring ridicule and jeers from all quarters. Mr. Crawford summoned the foreman.

"Jack, what in the devil does this mean?" He pointed to the obnoxious paragraph.

"That's just what I wanted to know last night, sir," was the reply. "Mr. Durfield seemed unusually cranky, though, and when I asked him about it told me to mind my own business—he knew what he was about. So I stuck it in."

"You showed it to him, did you?"

"I tried to, but he wouldn't look at it, seeing as he had read the proof once."

"O, he read the proof, did he?"

"Yes; and what's more, the article was in his own writing. He acted thundering queer, take it all around."

"Humph! I should think so. Has he been around this morning?"

"No."

"Well, that will do."

The foreman departed. Mr. Crawford muttered "something ails Dur," and fell into a brown study. He sat perfectly still, in profound cogitation, for several moments, when he was aroused by the entrance of a boy.

"A note for Mr. Durfield."

"Not in," said Mr. Crawford, "I'll give it to him when he comes."

The boy turned to go, but Mr. Crawford, noticing that the direction was in a lady's handwriting, called him back.

"Who is this from?" he asked.

"His wife," replied the boy.

"Isn't Mr. Durfield home?"

"No sir. Mrs. Durfield said he didn't come up last night at all."

"The devil!"

"Yes sir."

"By George, something's up," muttered Mr. Crawford. "Go and tell Mrs. Durfield that I will be up to see her soon if Dur doesn't come."

He then muttered to himself: "Can it be that his strange talk and actions last night really meant something? I'm sorry I mentioned old Champton's name to him. Dur is one of those fellows whom it won't do any good to get jealous."

Then Mr. Crawford went about his duties.

Toward evening, Ben not having appeared, he walked up to see Mrs. Durfield. He found that lady pale, anxious, with eyes moist and unnaturally bright. She greeted him with an eager appealing look.

"O Mr. Crawford—Ben—"

"Where is your husband, Mrs. Durfield?"

"Where is he! Do you not know? Have you not seen him?"

"Not since last night."

"Nor I since yesterday afternoon."

Mrs. Durfield stared about vacantly, and a dull heavy pain oppressed her heart.

Mr. Crawford regarded her steadily, and with something of sternness in his look. For a faint dawning of suspicion was receiving confirmation in his mind, as he recalled Ben's actions and words of the previous evening, and reflected on his unaccountable absence now. Has he fled from that most terrible and exasperating of all things to an honorable man—a false wife? Mr. Crawford would not have dared to breathe aloud this thought, but he said:

"Yes, Ben was at the office last night, and there was evidently something on his

mind. I never knew him to act so strangely. He spoke of Mr. Champton—”

“Mr. Cham—ah! do not mention that villain’s name!”

Mr. Crawford was astounded. “Mrs. Durfield, you surprise me. I believe you have called to see him, and he you, within a week.”

“Yes, yes—but he is a vile wretch. Go on!”

Nell’s face was bowed, and she waited in an agony of dread.

Mr. Crawford was confused, and hardly knew how to proceed. “There is not much to tell,” he said. “I left Ben soon after midnight, and you know we have not seen him since. Why do you call Mr. Champton a vile wretch?”

“I must tell you the whole story,” said Nell, hesitating and blushing deeply. “You know that Mr. Champton holds a mortgage on our house, and a payment is due to-morrow. Some time ago Ben saw that he was not going to be able to meet it, and he sought Mr. Champton’s indulgence. Why he refused it I did not then know, for he is rich and does not need the money. But now I know—it came to me yesterday—the vile plan the villain had formed. I, too, went to Mr. Champton. But not exactly on the same errand that Ben did. I only wanted him to promise his indulgence for a few days at the utmost. For I am to make the payment—yes, I. You look surprised, and well you may—for even Ben knows nothing of it. I used to have a talent for writing short stories, and for nearly a year past I have turned it to good account. While Ben has been at work during the long evenings, I have not been idle. I have sent my stories to papers and magazines—to two in particular. And with them I made arrangements to keep all the pay until such time as I should call for it. Two weeks ago I wrote for them to forward it so as to reach here about this time—just before the payment was due. It would be enough and twenty-five dollars over. I told Mr. Champton about it, and only asked that if it should not happen to arrive on the very day he would wait—not over a week at the most. He has put me off and refused to give a definite answer until this morning when he called by appointment. I was sure to have him come when Ben would not know it, for I wanted it to be a complete surprise to him. Well, he came

this morning and tried to make a bargain with me—such a bargain! I will not repeat his words. They should pass no virtuous lips. I sent him away wiser than he came—but angrier, too!”

“The scoundrel!”

“And now if the money does not come promptly we are to be turned into the streets. It could be here but for the storm. But the trains are all so delayed that the mails are very uncertain, and I am fearful that it will be too late.”

“I see, I see,” muttered Mr. Crawford, and then he exclaimed: “Curse that old villain! He ought to be hung! I am an old bachelor, Mrs. Durfield, and an improvident, extravagant wretch, else I would advance the money myself.”

“O, I would not think of asking you to do that.”

“Yes, but I would. However, that is not worth talking about. The last day is to-morrow.”

“Yes.”

“Well, the mails are struggling in at irregular intervals, and your remittances may possibly arrive.”

“Do you think so?” asked Nell, a ray of hope illuminating her countenance.

“It is not so very improbable.”

“I do not dare to hope for such good fortune. But Ben—where is he? That is my greatest concern now.”

“And mine, too,” said Mr. Crawford, gravely. “I will not deny that I am considerably alarmed about him. So many men have been driven by desperation to rash acts.”

“What do you mean?”

“Mrs. Durfield, I admire you,” said Mr. Crawford, after a pause. “I cannot forgive myself for the thoughts I harbored half an hour ago. Never mind what they were. But Dur is impetuous and jealous. You must read this. Such things sometimes indicate the turn a man’s mind takes. I can say no more.”

He handed her the *Morning Gazette* pointing to the vexatious paragraph, and hastened from the house.

Nell took the paper in astonishment and read the paragraph. A perplexed look, a crimson flush and a deathly paleness followed each other in quick succession over her face, and then with a low cry she sank fainting on a couch.

III.

A PASSING GLIMPSE.

A SOLDIER's tent! Blue coats, dusky guns with gleaming bayonets, muddy knapsacks, and grinning men! There were five men, four of them enjoying a spirited encounter at "seven-up," and the fifth seated at one side, writing. He was silent and paid no attention to the boisterous laughter and exclamations of his comrades. Shaggy whiskers hung from his face, and his eyes, though bright and almost wild-looking, seemed to be indicative of a steady unwavering purpose.

"I say, Dunkle!" shouted one of the card players, "what makes you so infernally industrious? There you are, scribbling away like a department clerk behindhand, instead of joining us and rousing up your spirits."

"I must get my Times letter off, and another one in less than four hours."

"Blame the letters. Let them go to the winds. Come on and take a turn with us."

"No."

"Well, do as you please, then. I don't see what makes you so glum, though. You will be called anything but a good fellow."

"I don't ask people to concern themselves about me."

A clamor outside interrupted the conversation. Men were shouting and all rushing to a certain point. Dunkle alone remained quiet, as the other four rushed out with lively curiosity. He heaved a sigh of relief as they left, and went on with his writing, busier than ever.

The excitement outside was caused by the appearance of an officer with a muddy, dried-up, dilapidated-looking mail bag. He held it aloft and said:

"This was captured by the rebels over a year ago. Col. J—— has just returned from Fort X—— with it, which our forces have taken. He found it stowed away among some old traps, where it has remained overlooked and undisturbed. It belongs to this regiment, and its contents, though a trifle stale, may be welcome to some of you."

There was a general shout of assent, and the letters and papers in the bag were soon distributed. The scrambling and shouting were succeeded by quiet, as each one betook himself to the most secluded spot attainable to examine the messages from absent ones.

A few received no letters or papers, and there were some unclaimed packages, addressed to those who had fought their last battles on this earth. Among them were several parcels of papers.

"The Blanktown Morning Gazette," said one, tearing a wrapper away.

At this juncture Dunkle came out of the tent. He had shown no expectation or desire of receiving a letter, but when the soldier read the name of the Blanktown Morning Gazette, his curiosity seemed a little aroused.

"I should like to see that paper if you would as soon look at some other," he said.

The package was tossed to him. He threw himself on the ground and unfolded one of the papers. He glanced over its columns and threw it down. Then, picking up another, a particular paragraph seemed to catch his eye.

"Hum hum," he muttered, "so that was it. I never was quite clear about that night." And then came the desperately despairing look which his companions had so often noticed on his face.

He laid that paper down and took up still another. It was the succeeding issue of the Blanktown Morning Gazette, and in this he read the following:

"**A BLUNDER.**—In our issue yesterday appeared a paragraph relating to the morning's telegraphic news that placed us in rather a ridiculous light. It is scarcely necessary to apologize for an apparent blunder; suffice it to say that it was one of those vexatious incidents that, while they are inexplicable, seem at times to be unavoidable."

"Very handsomely done!" exclaimed Dunkle, bursting into a laugh. Such a hollow, inhuman, mirthless laugh!

"What is it, Dunkle?" asked an idler.

"Ha! ha! just read this—and this. But," he added, in a low tone, "be quiet about it, and give the papers back to me."

The man read the articles with a grin, and returned the papers.

"Guess that chap must have been a little lunatic about that time," he said, and walked off.

As for Dunkle, he folded the papers carefully, and put them in his pocket, and went at his writing more fiercely and steadfastly than ever. When his work was finished it was evening. The letters were despatched

by a post messenger, and Dunkle had nothing to do but to join his companions at their games, or meditate.

He chose the former with eager haste, and was the gayest of the gay that evening. His laugh was the loudest—but was it the merriest?

After a while all went to rest for the night. The stars shone down peacefully through the clear air, while the soldiers slept, and naught disturbed the solitary stillness of the hour save the tramp of the sentry moving to and fro.

About midnight a sudden summons came. The order to march was given, and a hurried gathering of arms and forming into line ensued. None knew what was coming. All went blindly forward, to obey—and perhaps to die. Rumors of an important movement had been whispered for some days past, though none knew its object or extent. And now the lingering thought of all was, "this may be my last march."

It was a terrible battle. Hundreds were slaughtered, thousands wounded, and many captured on both sides. So nearly equal was the result that it was difficult to tell to whom belonged the victory. The wounded were picked up, and the opposing hordes separated.

In an ambulance belonging to the Confederates was Dunkle, with a helpless bleeding arm. He was in a sitting posture, pillowing in his lap the head of a Confederate lieutenant, who was much more seriously wounded than himself. The lieutenant had a handsome face. His pale lids closed over a pair of eyes that must surely be bright and honest. So Dunkle thought, as he gazed on the finely cut features, dark mustache, curling hair and fair brow. He arranged the head in a more comfortable position with gentle hands. It was as though they had not tried to kill each other. The eyes did not open, but a slight movement of satisfaction betokened thankfulness.

In this way they jogged along until a city was reached. They drew up before the door of a hospital. Alas! it was crowded to overflowing with groaning and insensible men.

Dunkle and the lieutenant were dumped together in one corner, but the former did not relinquish his charge, as he began to regard the helpless man. For a long time

they were unnoticed, and during that period the lieutenant opened his eyes. He attempted to move, but could only groan. He looked up at Dunkle, who was peering anxiously down into his face.

"Why did you do it?" asked the lieutenant in a faint voice.

"What?"

"Take care of me as you have?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because you're a Federal and I—" but without finishing the sentence, he said: "You are wounded, too."

"A little, but don't talk."

They did not say much more, but the lieutenant's eyes fully answered Dunkle's expectations. They were dark, deep-set, melancholy, and most sympathetic in their expression. They seemed to read Dunkle's inmost soul, and a bond of sympathy sprang up instantly between the two. The lieutenant said:

"They know me; I've got money. You shall not be used like the rest."

And the upshot was that in a few hours Dunkle and Vane (which was the lieutenant's name) were conveyed to the home of the latter—a chateau a few miles distant from the city.

It was a fine mansion, or had been, but was now desecrated by the devastation and ruin of war. As the wagon drove up an elderly lady, with a fine, highbred look, ran out with a cry of anguished inquiry. When she saw that Vane was alive, she hovered over him with a mother's nervous anxious love. Dunkle was greeted with hospitable welcome.

"How is Cecile?" was one of the first questions asked by Vane after he was comfortably established in a clean white bed. Dunkle noticed that Mrs. Vane avoided making a reply, and that she cast furtive glances of compassion at her son. He was too weak to press the inquiry.

A surgeon came soon, and Dunkle was about the house and grounds, strong as ever with the exception of his wounded arm.

But Vane's case was more serious, and the surgeon shook his head doubtfully. Whereat Mrs. Vane turned pale, and a look came over her face which seemed to say, "Must I sacrifice my last and all?"

The days went by, and Dunkle attended Vane with unceasing tenderness. But slowly the conviction forced itself upon all

that it was to be of no avail. The reaper was coming to reap his harvest, and this time it was to be in the shining green of growing youth, not the golden yellow of ripened age.

One night Dunkle was sitting by the bedside of Vane. The latter was deathly pale, his eyes sunken and bright with a light that seemed to be of some other sphere.

"Dunkle," he said, "I'm not going to stay with you long."

"My dear Vane—"

"No—you see it, but you did not know that I did. I might possibly have lived if I had cared much about it. My father and only brother have both perished in the cause for which I was fighting. After that I had only my mother and Cecile left. You don't know who Cecile was. Ah! you never looked on the purest face that ever shone. She filled my heart—she was to have been mine. But it is not to be on this side of the great river. Mayhap she will welcome me on the other shore when I have crossed its dark waters. My mother tried to keep it from me until I was stronger, but she could not. Poor girl!—yet why should I pity her? Does she not dwell with the angels, and is she not chief among them? Our love was strong and lasting as immortality itself." Vane was speaking in a musing wandering way, and Dunkle's face was buried in his hands. What scalding, bitter, lingering memories were coursing through his brain! Vane resumed:

"I am going, too. I feel it, and it is mistaken kindness to try to convince me otherwise. We've taken a great shine to each other, Dunkle, and if we once shot at one another, we've more than made it up. I want you to stay here as long as I do, and then you must take my mother North. I will arrange it with our authorities. We have five thousand dollars in gold here in the house, and certificates of deposit for fifty thousand in New York banks. I am sure you will take ten thousand as a parting gift from me. Don't refuse it—it would grieve me. Say not a word, but let that be settled. And you must look after my mother, for she will be desolate indeed. Poor mother! how she will regret leaving the old place. But it must be, for it is no longer safe here."

Vane paused a moment.

"Dunkle," he resumed, "you have a

history—I know it. But it would be painful for you to tell it, I think."

"O, may the Lord have mercy on my soul!" broke forth Dunkle. "I left a beautiful good wife, because, jealous fool that I was, I suspected her! I found it all out afterwards—I employed spies. But how could I go back? O! I am the most miserable of men!"

Vane suddenly sat upright in bed, gasping. His lips moved in vain attempts at articulation. His breath seemed to be leaving him. He rolled his eyes in mute supplication.

Dunkle, with thoughts driven from himself, seized the bellrope and pulled it violently. Then he turned to the side of the dying man and tenderly supported him.

IV.

ON A BRINK.

• WELL, the money did come, but Ben did not. At the very last hour Nell handed Mr. Champton his due. He received it with a scowl, and she departed in triumph with a receipt. But her husband was not heard from. His scarf was found, floating in the river, and it was given out that he was drowned. Not that Nell accepted the sad surmise in her own heart at first, but she dressed in mourning, and as the weeks and months glided by came to regard him as dead. Her hours of grief, her tears, her despondency, need not be related here. She soon saw that life, in its reality of solitude, was before her—that she and her children must live—that her mind and hands must provide shelter for them, must clothe their nakedness and feed their hunger. So, when the first shock was over, and she could settle herself down, she took herself to writing industriously.

Of course Mr. Crawford called on her occasionally, and he noticed through all the sadness that made sacred her beauty, that her eyes were not less luminous, though they were more womanly; that her face was not less fair, though it was dignified by sorrow.

What wonder is it that she began to grow wonderfully attractive to him—that his visits became more and more frequent, that he looked forward to them with increasing pleasure? He was the soul of honor, and never breathed words that

should not have been uttered by a brotherly friend. But how often other words trembled on his lips none knew but himself.

A year from Ben's disappearance a mysterious circumstance occurred. It was the period for another payment on the place. Mr. Crawford had offered to advance the money, having foreseen and provided for the emergency, as he well knew that Nell could scarcely do more than earn a fair support. But a receipt came to Mrs. Durfield, acknowledging the payment of the sum due, signed by Mr. Champton.

It was not supposed that he would be generous enough to give the receipt without receiving the money, and consequently the circumstance filled Nell with surprise, and set wild thoughts of hope running through her head. Mr. Crawford was equally astonished, and immediately set himself about inquiring into the matter. But he could learn nothing. Mr. Champton could give him no satisfaction.

"The money was paid me," he said, "and I gave the receipt."

"You did not see Durfield?"

"No."

"There was no message from him?"

"No."

"Nothing to lead you to believe him still living?"

"Nothing."

And that was all. Months passed and no solution to the mystery was furnished. The fever of expectancy into which Nell had been raised gradually subsided, and she went on in her routine of writing and caring for her children.

Meanwhile, Mr. Crawford's calls were continued, and to say that they did not give pleasure to Nell would be to misstate the truth. She looked upon him as the kindest of friends, and an adviser to be implicitly trusted in. The position, it cannot be denied, was a delicate one for both of them, and it might well be imagined that they would in time come to be a great deal to each other.

But the advantage was on Nell's side, for whereas Mr. Crawford had no ties of any kind to keep him from falling in love, the sanctuary of her heart was ever guarded by the memory of her husband, the uncertainty of his fate, and a vague unexpressed hope that he might still be living. Thus her affections could not be trans-

ferred without a long wearisome struggle. But the result must come in time, and it did. Mr. Crawford called one evening, and his manner betrayed an absence of his usual self-possession. Nell saw at a glance that he wished to impart something of importance, and she trembled—for what woman would have failed to detect the approach of such a moment as was coming? It was just dusk, and Mr. Crawford gathered courage from the obscurity which prevailed. Nell's sombre dress could scarcely be distinguished from other objects in the semi-darkness, but Mr. Crawford gazed into her bright eyes as he said, in a tone teeming with suppressed passion:

"Mrs. Durfield, I have come to think of you during the past year as a man should think only once in his lifetime of a woman. Day by day it has grown stronger—this love of mine—until now I am ready to lay my life down to your service. To care for you and protect you would be a privilege blessed above all others. Can it be mine?"

Nell trembled; her whole being quivered; she did not immediately reply.

"Say, Mrs. Durfield—my dear Nell—will you be my wife?"

His tone betrayed how thoroughly, sadly, terribly in earnest he was. Nell felt this. In a tremulous voice she said:

"O Mr. Crawford, you must know what memories your words bring up. Those sad, sad days will never cease weighing down on me. Poor Ben, are you dead, and did I drive you to destruction? O that some good angel would give me an answer!"

Choking sobs stopped her utterance for a moment. Then, with an effort controlling herself, she said, with a half smile, "You see, Mr. Crawford, that I have only part of a heart to give."

"Even a small part of your heart, dear Nell, would be a boon worth cherishing."

"I don't think I am ready to marry again," said Nell, quite calmly. "For do I know yet that Ben is dead?"

"I should think so," replied Mr. Crawford, quickly. "Pardon me, but all the evidence points that way. And what more will you ever find out about it?"

"Perhaps nothing more; but if I should marry, and Ben should come back, it would be worse than perpetual widowhood. I would love him, but could not go to him, and I would be nobody's wife."

"But think of the strong evidence,"

persisted Mr. Crawford, "and the long time that has elapsed. Don't think I am anxious to prove Ben dead. I would restore him to you this minute, if I could, for I know that would be your greatest happiness. But I waited until I must speak, for my love could not be kept back. Tell me, Nell, do you think *anything* of me—do I occupy the smallest corner in your heart—would you marry me if you would any one?"

"I can say sincerely, Mr. Crawford, that I believe I think more of you than I ever could of any one save Ben. You have been my best friend. You have won my lasting gratitude."

"Do not speak of gratitude. The word sounds harsh. It must be love, or it must be nothing between you and me."

"O no. We can be friends—dear friends."

"Yes, we may be friends, but you must not insult my love by speaking of gratitude. O, you cannot know the strength of my feeling toward you. It is of a kind that never dies!"

"I esteem you—indeed I do—and sympathize with you, Mr. Crawford. You honor me more than I deserve. I might"—with a blush—"do what you ask—"

"You might! Ah! does your heart incline even the least bit toward me, then? Only say yes, Nell—"

"No—no—not now. Something seems to tell me to wait. Something holds me back. I must not do it."

"Will you utterly cast me off, then?"

"I did not say that."

"But you make me cease to have hope for what was to be the great consummation of my life?"

"I did not say no. I only refused to say yes."

"Ah! you encourage me to hope that sometime you will be mine."

"Do not press me too hard. I must have time to think—to turn over all that *might* happen, and to make up my mind what possibilities I can face."

"Well," said Mr. Crawford, after a pause, "I will not weary you by pressing the matter now. But, Nell, I love you with all the strength of my heart. I feel that you are to be mine—it must be—for fate would not make me love you so, and then rob me of you. No, you are to be my precious jewel, to be treasured up and cared

for as tenderly as my rough self can do it. I must leave you, for I cannot stay without telling you how much I love you, and I know it distresses you now. But remember who is thinking of you every hour in every day and night!"

He caught her hand, imprinted a tender reverential kiss on it, and was gone.

That night Nell prayed to God to guide her, and called aloud to Ben to return to her if he was alive. Her perplexity and suspense were too much for her poor tried heart to bear.

But the days went on, and no response came, and Nell was fast making up her mind to accept the hand of him who loved her so sincerely, and who would so gladly devote his life to caring for her with loving watchfulness.

V.

BITTER-SWEET.

MR. CRAWFORD had run in to see Nell a few moments one evening, but was obliged to leave early, shortly before eight o'clock, editorial duties demanding his attention. As he passed out at the gate, he noticed a man on the opposite side of the street, looking steadily at the house. He wore a slouch hat, had heavy black whiskers, was dressed with ordinary neatness, and walked slowly. As Mr. Crawford passed down the street, he looked back and saw the man cross over. He lingered a moment, watching him, and the man, observing this, walked on past Nell's house. Mr. Crawford stood in indecision for a moment, and then turned and walked rapidly on his way.

"Pshaw!" he thought, "he can mean no harm, and if he did, it's too early. Strange that something in his appearance attracted my attention so."

Nell, having put the children to sleep after Mr. Crawford had left, drew up to her desk and gathered her writing materials together. She was just about to reach up and turn on the gas when there was a knock at the door. She answered the summons, and the black-whiskered stranger confronted her.

"Does Mrs. Durfield live here?"

The voice seemed to smite Nell's ear like the pealing of a million bells! Her head whirled and seemed about to burst, her heart stopped beating, and without a word she fell fainting to the floor.

"O my poor wronged Nell!" cried the stranger, lifting her up as he would a babe, and carrying her in the parlor to a sofa.

He laid her tenderly down, seized a pitcher of water that stood on a table, and set about restoring her. His hands trembled and his whole frame shook. When she showed signs of life he almost fainted himself. But that would not do; so he only held her hands and watched anxiously. At last her eyes opened.

"Do you know me, darling, and can you forgive me?"

"Dear Ben!" she gasped, with all strength gone from her.

It is not for mortal pen to depict the joy of that reunion, or attempt to describe the scene that followed.

But we will see what Ben had to say for himself the next evening, when he detailed to Nell and Mr. Crawford his adventures since that fearful night. They were all seated together in the cosy little parlor, as he said:

"After leaving the house and running about the streets through the storm, I gradually lost all consciousness. The first thing I then remember is hearing a terrible thundering noise, and seeing a huge eye of fire glaring down upon me. I raised up and found that I was on the railroad track. An engine had halted within less than three feet of me, and men were climbing down its sides with lanterns. They picked me up, and brushed portions of the frozen snow from my clothes. You probably think that the cold, and the wet, and the great danger I had just escaped ought to have cooled my brain and taken some of my mad folly away. But it did not. I begged to be taken aboard, and as I offered to pay my fare, they could not refuse. When that train stopped I took another, and went on until I found myself in Washington. There I enlisted—joined the Union army. I will not stop now to tell you all my adventures. But I received a small bounty, put it in a bank, saved my wages, and wrote war letters to the New York dailies.

"Thus I had enough when the year came around to make the payment on the house. I sent it by Jack Sparrow, who had a furlough. Jack is a rare boy, and performed his task well. In the meantime, I had learned what a fool I had made of myself, how I had wronged Nell. I could not for-

give myself, and vowed not to return until I could bring money enough to pay the entire balance due on the place, and thus atone in a measure for my wicked blunder. No—I shall not spare myself—I was wild—mad—wicked. I ought to be punished—cast off by you, Nell.

"After a while came a great battle, and I was wounded and taken prisoner. I made friends with a young Confederate lieutenant, and made my quarters at his home. He was wounded worse than I, and I took all the care of him. For there was something about him one couldn't help loving, and I know he thought something of me. He finally died. I must tell you all about him sometime—poor Vane! I brought his mother to New York. Having her in charge, I was allowed to pass through the rebel lines, as the Vanes were very well known and influential.

"They made me take ten thousand dollars out of a small fortune they had deposited in New York banks. So I am now pretty well off. The place shall be paid for, and old Champton can go to the d—l. I saw the copy of the *Morning Gazette* in which my reckless display was described as 'a blunder.' It was charitable to call it that.

"Well, I am here to sue for Nell's forgiveness, and to apply for my old situation, if Mr. Crawford dares trust me again. How is it?"

"O, I'll forgive you this time," said Nell, with eyes in which the withheld radiance of two years shone, "but you must not do so any more!"

"And you shall have your old place," said Mr. Crawford, "if you will solemnly promise to commit no more blunders."

He stopped, and with a thoughtful look in which there was something of sadness, gazed steadily at Nell for a few minutes.

"You two are happy," he finally said, "and I am glad of it. May the rest of your days be all sunshine. And as for myself, I must look forward, I suppose, to spending my life as an old bachelor. I always said it would be so!"

He rose and walked to the other side of the room, whistling a low strain. He leaned his elbows on the mantel-shelf, and as he stood with bowed head, a tear in which there was naught of unmanliness dropped from his eye.

BOBBIE'S KITE.

Dupee, Louise

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BOBBIE'S KITE.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

"FAITH," said Bobbie, "it's the finest kite I ever laid me two eyes on! It takes the shine all off of Tim Raynor's boughten one!" And he fairly danced with delight on his heavy crutches, his poor little pale face quite radiant.

"Well now, Bob," said Jack, "you mustn't be teasing mother by staying out too much in the cold to fly it. The wind goes right through yer ye know, poor little misfortunate, and mother's worrying the life out of her, for fear ye'll get yer death o' cold in this blushtering spring weather. For my part I'm afraid the wind'll take yez up like a dandelion-ball and drift yer off to nowhere!"

"No," said Bobbie, "I wont worrit the mother, she do be so good to me, and you, too, Jackie, and I'm no good to anybody—only just a throuble."

"Nonsense!" said Jack, "you're niver a throuble, Bob, you're the light of mother's eyes, and as for doing no good—why, yer

do a heap o' good to both of us. We're so proud of yer, lad. Didn't the praste say you were a famous—genius—he meant, and that some day ye'd be a fine artist if ye had yer health and got the iddication? And Bob I mane yer shall have the iddication. Ye can't guess what I'm going to do—where I'm going?"

Bobbie hadn't the least idea.

"Well, promise not to cry," said Jack, "and I'll tell yer. It's good news, only I'm afraid yer wont think so, at first. I'm going to sea, Bob—I didn't tell yer before, because I thought 'twould make yer feel bad, but I meant the kite as a parting gift. Captain Hardy has made me a firstrate offer, and I shall bring home such a heap o' money to mother and yer and baby!"

"O Jacky!" was all poor Bobbie could utter, and in spite of himself, a teardrop large and round fell on to the tip of his little peaked nose.

"We wont be living on this dirty marsh

"by-and-by," continued Jack, "and mother shan't be working the life out of her over the washtub. Yer shall have teachers, and learn to paint with the best of them, and the baby—swate little Kathleen, she shall go to school, and grow up like a lady—that she shall!"

But Bobbie was in no mood to listen to this. What would the finest house in the world be to him without Jack? What would money and teachers be, and Jack away, nobody knew where—perhaps suffering in some dreadful storm at sea, perhaps dying in some faraway country! How could he sleep in his own little bed at night; and Jack at sea? Would not the waves and winds be always moaning in his ears, even on the calmest nights? and O, how long the days would be without the prospect of Jack's honest freckled face to peep in at the end! He ran into the house, and throwing himself at full length on the floor, gave vent to his grief in such a vehement fashion, that the baby was frightened and joined in the uproar with all her might. The new kite was left forgotten on the grass, and at that moment there wasn't a bright spot in the whole world to poor little crippled Bobbie.

When Jack came home to tea that night, he didn't meet his usual merry welcome. They were merry people, though they were so poor, and Jack and his mother were often weary. Two years before, and a few weeks before the baby was born, the father had died, but he had been sick for a long time, poor soul, and wanted to go to heaven. His death cast a cloud over the little dwelling for a time, but they were good trustful folks, and knew that if it had not been for the best God would not have taken him, and why should they be grieving for him while he was happy? Baby was a jolly little thing, with a dimple tucked into every spare corner of her pretty Irish face; the mother was willing to work, and found plenty of work to do; Jack was brave, and hearty, and honest, and though only fifteen years of age, did almost the work of a man, when he could find employment; but it was a country town where they lived, and the kind of work that he could do was scarce, especially in the summer. Bobbie, as Jack had said, was a genius; he had been crippled by a fall when he was a wee baby, and had always been delicate in health. Instead of playing out of doors with the other

children, ever since his fingers were large enough to hold a pencil, he had been amusing himself by drawing pictures—clumsy things they were of course—in imitation of the objects around him in the cabin, and the trees, and birds, and hills, he could see from the window. And lately he had taken to making portraits in charcoal. First he drew one of the baby, that was the baby, exactly, they all said, so like her that they wanted to kiss it. There was the funny little nose, that just looked up a thrifle, as Bob expressed it, and the round wideawake eyes with the laugh in them, like life. Then inspired to greater ambition by the praise bestowed upon this, he made a picture of the priest himself as he looked before the altar of a Sunday morning. The priest was a handsome man, with a noble head, and fine clearcut features, and Bobbie's artist eye recognized his beauty, and it was no mean representation of it that he exhibited on the little square piece of pasteboard after much careful labor.

The proud mother carried it to the priest, Bobbie hobbling along beside her, and the priest was well pleased, and said Bobbie was a real genius, and would be a great man some day, if he could only be educated. He took the picture and gave the little boy a sum of money which amazed, as well as delighted both his mother and himself. He really seemed to be very much interested in the little artist at the time, but afterwards he forgot all about him, for he was a selfish man, and had the care of a large and poverty-stricken parish.

As I said before, Jack missed the usual merry greeting from his mother and Bobbie, when he went home that night. They both tried to smile and look as if nothing had happened, but it was of no use. The sight of the bye, as his mother said, brought tears into her eyes. Bobbie bent over the picture he was making of him, to hide his own tears, and even the baby, rosy little Kathleen, shook her curly pate mournfully at Zack, as she called him, because he was going away to leave her.

"Come, Bob!" said Jack, as soon as their silent meal was over, "let's go out and see how the kite will go, just for a few minutes before dark. You'll have plenty of time to do that wonderful picture of meself after I'm gone, and who knows when we'll fly the kite together again? I guess you can do it without looking at me face, can't yer?"

Bobbie rather thought he could. Didn't he know just precisely where every freckle was located on that dear face? didn't he know by heart every expression the honest blue eyes could wear?

"Can't I speake me own thoughts widout seeing the inside o' meself?" said he, earnestly, rubbing his little white fist into his eyes.

So the two went out into the cheery April wind, and sent the kite flying like a great white bird over the desolate marshes, Kathy clapping her hands delightedly from her post at the window, and the mother looking on with a sad smile. Bob's great passion was a kite, though his ragged little neighbors did assure him that kites was all out o' fashion long ago, and in spite of this, his new kite soon collected an eager-faced little crowd, and there was a great deal of betting about how high it would go, predictions that it would get entangled in the tall willows, and petitions to be allowed to hold the string. Bob almost forgot Jack was going away, for a little while, and that was what Jack intended he should do, for more than all the world beside, he loved this feeble little brother who looked up to him with a sort of worship.

Before either Bob or the baby was awake the next morning, Jack was away. He thought it would be well to spare them the pain of parting, but tucked a little package of candy under the pillow of each. Poor Bob! that candy was less sweet than ever he had eaten before, and all that day, though he tried to be very brave, and comfort, instead of distressing his mother, he could hardly keep the tears out of his eyes for one moment. They blinded him so that he could not finish Jack's picture.

"Don't fret that way, Bobbie;" said his mother. "Jack's gone to earn money, so you can have teachers and learn to draw as fine as anything."

"But I didn't want Jack to work for me," said Bobbie, gulping down a sob.

"O, yer can pay him some day! yer can make a gentleman of him—fine folk it do all, Jack says so. Jist kape thrying, me bye, and don't fret yerself sick. And ye must write to Jack, yer know, yer poor mother doesn't know how." So Bobbie took courage, and did kape thrying, and every day his little sketches grew to look more fine and artistic. In about two months they heard from Jack; he was well and happy,

and he sent them more money than they had ever seen at a time, before in all their lives. He liked a sailor's life very well, only he wanted to see them all so much that he could hardly wait for the time to come when he should be on his way home. Then they heard from him again when he was in Liverpool, and the ship was preparing for her homeward voyage.

Bobbie was going to school, and was as happy as could be with Jack away; the baby was growing to be a great girl, and was so merry and cunning, and Mrs. Flynn the mother toiled on as contentedly and cheerfully as ever; putting aside what she could of the money Jack had sent, for Bob's education must be seen to in spite of everything. But their affairs did not prosper so bravely for a long time. Just as they were beginning to look for Jack home, a sad calamity overtook the little household. Poor Mrs. Flynn fell and broke her arm and was not able to use it again for months. Bobbie was a brave little nurse, and there was money enough in the house to pay the rent for two or three months, and there was the prospect of Jack's coming before then, so they got along comparatively well at first, for the poor woman forgot her pain while hearing Jack's old letters read over and thinking of Bob's future. They had not heard from Jack for some time, to be sure, but then was not that a sure sign that he was on his way home? and so Bob went without his supper to save a penny with which to buy the evening paper, and keep posted on the shipnews. But the days and weeks went by; the closet was as bare as Mother Hubbard's; there was no coal left in the bin; Jack Frost was at the height of his reign, and still he did not come; still they heard no more news from him, there was no mention of the Heron, on the ship-list. Mrs. Flynn's arm was not strong enough to use yet, and to keep them all from starving Bob took a basket and went begging from door to door. Poor little Bob! he was delicate and unused to such exposure, and it was weary work travelling about on those heavy crutches of his, and the result of his labor was a lung fever. For long weeks he tossed on his little bed, raving about Jack in his delirium, and during that time, almost every article of furniture the little cabin contained was sold to provide the family with the necessities of life. Then as soon as Bob was able to be

moved, they were all obliged to go to the poorhouse—a sore trial to Mrs. Flynn and Bob, who had a proud independent spirit, if they were poor Irish people; but little Kathleen was as merry over it as if it were the most desirable abode imaginable. They were treated kindly enough there, and Bob and Kathy were great pets with the other inmates of the house. There was one old man there, who used to be a sailor, who told such wonderful stories that one was hardly able to wink while he was telling them, and his account of his own experience gave Mrs. Flynn and Bob great hope that they should one day see Jack again, though everybody seemed to believe the Heron was lost.

"Lor' sakes!" said he, "catch a boy of his age to be drowned! he'll be home fore long, take my word for it—a bit o' seaweed to cling to's enough to save a boy. I've been saved miraculous more'n once myself. What if the ship was lost, the boy wasn't!"

And Bob went to sleep every night dreaming of Jack and the diamond valley, and cases full of yellow tinkling coins which the old man was sure Jack had stumbled upon, and which was keeping him away so long, though it was evident that the poor old fellow had never met with such fortune himself.

But the year went by, and still never a word from Jack, and almost broken-hearted Mrs. Flynn took her little family away from the poorhouse to the city, where she had procured work in a laundry. She was as strong as ever now, and could not bear to live on charity any longer.

It was a miserable place where they lived, just on the outskirts of the city, on a marsh more filthy and unwholesome than the one on which they lived when Jack left them. Hope was beginning to desert them, now; the very mention of Jack's name brought tears to their eyes. Bob had no heart to work at his drawing, and grew more and more feeble every day. Even Kathy was losing her round rosy cheeks and merry ways, and sometimes during the cold winter weather the cupboard was bare again, and the fire got very low in spite of all the mother could do.

Two years had gone by, and it was spring again.

"Jacky will have been gone two years come next Monday," said Bob, mournfully, looking up at his brother's picture which

hung on the wall placed in a rude frame which Bob himself had manufactured.

"Do you mind, Kathy, how we flew the kite the night before he went away? How splendidly it did go up over the houses and everything! I don't s'pose you do, for you were a bit tiny then, and Jack could toss you right over his shoulder!"

"I never saw it flied," said Kathy, shaking her bright auburn curls. "O Bobbie, fly it now, that's a good boy, there's an illiant breeze! You could fly it right out of the windy you see."

"No," said Bob, rubbing his little white fists into his eyes, "I couldn't bear it, deed I couldn't!"

"Couldn't bear what, Bobbie?" said Kathy, wonderingly. "I could hold the string if you arn't strong enough, only jist you show me how!"

"Faith, 'tisn't that!" said Bobbie, "I'm strong enough still to hold a kite string, but I couldn't bear to see it a sailing away so pert and happy-looking, and him that made it dead."

Kathy looked very sorrowful, and touched the kite with a sort of awe.

"Wait a bit," said Bob, taking a second thought, "I will fly it for you, Kathy darlint. Jack would like me to, I know. It's well to kape up cheer if we can!"

So slowly untwisting the string, he let the old kite soar up from the window, guiding it carefully with his little thin hand, and following its movements with his hollow wistful eyes. The kite did bravely, and as Kathy had said, there was an illiant breeze. It shook out its long tail with a graceful flutter. It did not hurry, but went slowly, softly sailing toward the blue, the red letters of Bob's name showing bravely on its breast. Kathy fairly screamed with delight, and out of the miserable houses around trooped the children great and small, to see the pretty sight. The little girls clapped their hands; the babies cooed and lifted their wee dimpled arms toward it, and the little boys agreed, though they were half inclined to be envious, that it was the finest kite ever seen.

Suddenly Bob's hand commenced to tremble. A stranger was coming across the green—a tall young man in a sailor's jacket who looked strangely familiar.

"Don't jerk the string so, Bob, only jist see how high the kite will go!" said Kathy, impatiently.

But Bob did not hear; his face was very white, and then he let the string go altogether, and if Kathy had not caught it as quick as a flash, the kite would have gone on a voyage of its own, who knows where?

"Arrah! and 'se found yez at last!" shouted a joyful hearty voice under the window. "Ah Bob, ye did well to kape the kite, else I might have gone searching yez for years, yet!"

Kathy came near doing the same thing that Bob had done, but she recovered herself and began to wind up the string as fast as ever she could, greatly to the disgust of her audience, shouting, "It's Jack, O, I know it is Jack!"

In another moment, Bob was a little white heap in Jack's arms, and the mother came in and found them so.

Wasn't that as joyful a moment as could be imagined? There was Jack safe, and sound, and hearty—Jack himself, and not his ghost, Jack just as he had left them two years ago, only he had grown taller and more manly, and was dressed like a gentleman. There was only one drawback to their happiness, and that was poor Bob's sickly looks. Jack's eyes rested on him sorrowfully.

"The docther says 'tis the bad air here, makes him so," said the mother, guessing his thoughts. "He says there's no particular disease about him, only he's delicate, and needs a change like, and luxuries."

"Well, if that's all," said Jack, brightening up wonderfully, "he shall be well again before you think of it! O mother, if I could only have found you before, I've had such good fortune!" And putting one arm around his mother, and the other round Bob and Kathy, Jack told his story. I shall not try to tell it in his words.

The Heron was wrecked in a storm on her homebound trip, and all on board were lost, with the exception of the mate and Jack. They clung to one of the floating spars until a ship came by and took them in, more dead than alive. That ship was bound for China, and there, of course, they must go. Jack worked his way, and was treated kindly. All the trouble he experienced was anxiety about home. But it was a long, long voyage, and he grew pretty tired of the sea at last. The captain of the ship took him back with him as far as Liverpool, and Jack was trying to find a chance in some ship which was to sail at

once for America, when one day he happened to be on the pier just as one of the New York steamers was about to sail. He was looking wistfully at the passengers, who were talking so joyfully about home, when all of a sudden a great cry arose, and Jack, from where he was standing, could see that a little girl had fallen into the water. Quick as thought, he jumped in after her, and, being a good swimmer and having strong arms, he succeeded in rescuing her. She was the daughter of an American gentleman, who was just going to embark for home, and, creeping from the side of her nurse, to make the acquaintance of a playful dog, in her excitement she ventured too near the edge of the pier, and before she could be reached, had fallen backwards into the water. The father, Mr. Harris, was overwhelmed with gratitude, and after Jack had told him his story, he insisted on taking him home with him on the steamer, and on arriving at New York, offered him a situation in his warehouse in that city, at a salary which made Jack open his eyes with amazement, it was so large. Of course he accepted it joyfully, and started for the old house, to find his mother, and Bob, and Kathy, with a light heart. But when he got there he found strangers in the cabin, and none of the neighbors could tell of their whereabouts. One woman thought they had gone to New York, but did not know for certain. This was about two months before, and ever since then Jack had been searching for them, assisted by Mr. Harris, who spared no money or pains in the effort. They had advertised for them in the papers over and over again. But that night, as Jack was returning from some errand he had to do in that part of the city, he caught sight of a kite soaring like a bird in the air above him, and, as he came near it, it made a sudden swoop downward. He saw the red letters, and recognized his own handiwork. That it was Bob's kite flashed over him in an instant, and Bob himself must be near. But from whence it started he could not determine, until, crossing the green, he saw the two faces at the window, and his heart gave one great leap of joy.

"The brave old kite has done good service!" said Jack, an hour or two later. "Let's give it one more lift, to celebrate this happiest day that ever was." And

the kite never soared so proudly before or afterwards as it did then; though Jack's and Bob's children fly it to this day over breezy fields, and boast to the boys that if it is an old kite, it's a kite with a story.

The next day Mr. Harris came to see them, and took them all to a neat little cottage he had bought for them just out of the smoke and dust of the city. There was a little silver strip of river near, which wound in among the daisies and grass in a manner which delighted Bob's artist eye, and a bit of lawn in front of the house, with great drooping trees sweeping over it. Bob grew better and stronger every day in this new atmosphere, and O, they were so happy and so comfortable! Mr. Harris was

as benevolent as he was rich, and indeed he felt that he owed everything to Jack for saving the life of his only child, and he gave Bob every opportunity to become a great artist, and Bob improved those opportunities, and did become a great artist; and not only his family, but the whole country were proud of him. But he didn't make Jack a gentleman, because Jack was a gentleman already; and if you could hear fine folks now-a-days boasting of their acquaintance with Mr. James Flynn, the rich and philanthropic merchant, you would hardly believe that he was ever the ragged Irish boy Jack, who sailed away in the Heron at the beginning of my story.

BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.

ESTHER SERLE KENNETH

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BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

"You have a very pretty governess for your little niece, Mrs. Vane."

"Pretty, Mrs. Nilcourt? Why, she has red hair!"

"Indeed? I did not observe. I thought she had a sweet face. Only a moment's glimpse, you know," responded Mrs. Nilcourt, warned off dangerous ground.

"Very good-looking, perhaps, if not quite underbred," observed Mrs. Vane, proceeding her guest through the garden to the bed of new pansies to be exhibited.

"She's Allen's fancy. Found her somewhere in a cottage, crying over her dead mother, quite alone in the world. He must needs take her up. Quixotic, you know—all the Elsingburgs are. There, here are the beauties—King of the Blacks, I believe Mr. Vick calls them."

"Charming—charming, indeed!"

"Syren wore a knot of them in her corsage, at the levee, in the city, last night," remarked Mrs. Vane.

"Ah, Syren—yes. Lovely creature! You

cannot deny that your daughter is beautiful, dear Mrs. Vane!"

"She is considered beautiful, I believe," condescendingly.

"Certainly, certainly!" sure now of being upon right ground. "We seldom have the pleasure of meeting a young lady like Miss Vane."

Mrs. Nilcourt was new to Washington society, and a little afraid of Mrs. Vane, Senator Elsingburg's aunt. Also most anxious to propitiate her.

"And your little niece is a charming child."

"Angelique is a pet," returned Mrs. Vane.

Meanwhile, Syren, at a window of the breakfast-room, shrugged her white shoulders, and wondered when that odious Mrs. Nilcourt was going. She had something of importance to communicate to her mamma.

By-and-by Mrs. Vane came in.

"Why are you not practising, my dear?" she asked.

"Mamma, I have something to tell you; do shut the door. Allen is in love with Miss Fay!"

"The governess? Preposterous!"

"But little pitchers have long ears, and children and fools speak the truth. Angel says he gave Cecile a book on her birthday, last week; and when she takes the child to walk, Allen joins them in the park, and goes sauntering along the streets with them, right in people's faces!"

"Well, he's Angelique's brother," said Mrs. Vane, casting about for some excuse for this threatening aspect, but looking very pale.

"That is no reason he should pay court to her governess. There is no use trying to stave it off, mamma—he is dead in love with her. I suspected it when he brought her out here. And she is handsome. Now what are we going to do?"

Miss Vane, in her perfect girl-of-the-period costume, was very pretty, but the blue of her eyes was rather too pale to be exactly agreeable as she turned them wide upon her mother, asking this question. They suggested, somehow, an unscrupulous nature, deep selfishness, cruel ambition.

"There is no use making a fuss with the girl. Though I could *kill* her! and that's the truth!" in a burst of passion.

"Hush! hush! there is Angel on the piazza. I don't see," sinking into a chair, for she had been standing, "how this has come about. I thought Allen—"

"He never cared a straw for me—in that way. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Not that I would leave any stone unturned to get Allen, but it's of no use, with that Cecile Fay's beautiful eyes and magnificent hair under his nose every day!"

Syren paused. Mrs. Vane did not think to declare that Cecile's hair was red. She looked desponding, excessively worried.

"Of course something can be done," at last.

"I don't know—not much hope," responded Syren, sulkily; and continued, "I never shall have another such a chance as Senator Elsingburg and the Magnolias."

"No," musingly.

Down below the grounds, on a hillock overlooking the river, sat Cecile Fay. There was no one in the world to whom she wished any harm—no one, you would have thought, looking at that delicate face, who could have wished her any. If not perfectly beautiful, she had, as Syren Vane said, beautiful eyes, and hair clustering upon her shoulders of that rare tint loved by painters, golden-hued.

She cared nothing for Mr. Elsingburg's wealth and position. Like a breath from heaven had come his love into her life. It seemed almost too great a happiness to be true; and she asked for nothing more on earth.

As she sat there—the child Angelique playing at her feet with flowers and grasses—Mrs. Vane, wearing a shade hat and white shawl, leisurely approached her.

Her shadow fell; Cecile looked up—arose.

"Yes, better not sit on the grass, my dear; it rained yesterday. I am going down to the river; come with me. Come, Angel!"

They went down the green, sunlecked, sloping path. The water shone with a silver glow.

Drawn up on the bank was a tiny shallop, with oars. The child danced towards it.

"O take me to row, Miss Fay!" she cried.

"Does Miss Fay row, Angel?"

"A little," responded Cecile. "I would

like to go out a little way, if we might take the boat."

"Certainly; it is Mr. Elsinburg's."

Mrs. Vane saw how Cecile's cheek flushed. Perhaps it was with the exertion of pushing the boat into the water.

"Will you come?" she asked Mrs. Vane.

"Not yet; let me see you go over to the island and back first," as the child took her seat beside Cecile, and the latter dexterously lifted the oars.

So quickly Cecile pushed off she did not notice that the boat leaked. Nor did she observe it, the bottom of the shallop being covered with autumn-yellow fallen leaves, until the child complained that there was water upon her feet.

"I do not see any water, Angel."

"But the leaves are all afloat! there is water under them!" exclaimed the child.

They were already midstream.

"I can row over and come back—such a short way," thought Cecile. "Put your little feet up on the seat, dear." So they went on; the diamond-bright water dripping from the oar-blades—sucking, dark, cold and treacherous, under the bed of golden leaves. They touched the island—Belie Isle, as it was called—and Cecile turned the boat.

They were an eighth of a mile from the shore they had left, perhaps. Mrs. Vane stood on the green slope, in her white shawl, watching. Not another human figure was to be seen. East and west the water lay shining among its emerald slopes and overhanging trees; there was no sound but the merry voice of little Angel. Dear little Angel, it was so nearly her last "good time."

The bright dripping oars rose and fell.

"Slower, she is rowing slower," murmured Mrs. Vane. "The boat is growing heavy." And she measured the distance sharply with her narrowing eyes. "The child! but then, there is my child. She shall not be balked by that puny thing."

What a weight the boat had grown to those slender arms! It settled, swayed—the child saw Cecile's look of terror, and screamed. For the tiny hole in the boat's bottom had suddenly widened. The water

came rushing in—engulfed them. The two fell into each other's arms as the shallop went down beneath their feet, submerging them in the gliding stream.

Mrs. Vane, on the bank, stood still, and looked all about. She saw no one coming.

The circles about those two floating heads were growing larger.

Hark! was that a shout?

No.

Yes! Another. A horse galloped to the spot. A man—she saw the face of Allen Elsinburg—flung himself off, and almost simultaneously into the water. Then Mrs. Vane began to scream:

"O help! help! My dear Cecile and my darling niece are drowning. O help! help! help!"

A carriage whirled to the spot, and she shrieked more dismally than ever. In fact, she went into very genuine hysterics.

For there was that in Mr. Elsinburg's face as he dashed past her, which made her tremble. She felt that he saw—understood.

She saw the two half-drowned dripping figures drawn out—then rushed away home and hid herself in her chamber.

But she heard the bustle of the others' coming home—of the master of the Magnolias giving orders—of the servants' eager obedience. By-and-by she heard Allen Elsinburg's step on the stairs.

He opened the door—spoke as to a disobedient child:

"I want to speak to you."

She came out.

"I have no wish," he said, sternly, "that a would-be murderer should sleep beneath my roof to-night. Here are tickets for yourself and Syren. You will, if you please, take to-night's boat for the Limes."

She answered not a word.

So the enemy was overcome and banished. And as soon as Cecile Fay was convalescent from that terrible experience—whereby death had reached her within a hair's breadth—she became the happy wife of Senator Elsinburg; and to-day is both a happy woman and an admired queen of Washington society.

BY THE SAD SEA WAVES.

BY MAY CELESTE WADSWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

THEY were standing on the cliff, Cecil Villers and Ralph Lowenstein. A brisk breeze blew from the sea, wantonly caressing the bright golden locks of Cecil, and fanning a faint rose tint into the softly-rounded cheek. There was a fluttering of azure ribbons and dainty white dress-skirt, just a glimpse of tiny slippers feet and prettiest of ankles, which Ralph noted with a sensation indescribable. It was a June twilight. The fresh dewy air was redolent with a thousand entrancing perfumes; on the sky, the waves, and softly tinting the long line of white beach, a warm mellow glow lingered,

"Filling more and more with crystal light,
As pensive evening deepens into night."

The dark dreamy eyes of the woman wandered afar over the wide-spreading ocean to the faint low line that marked the horizon. The sea to her was an unknown region that stretched far away, wonderful and beautiful in its solemn mystery. She dreamed of distant lands, where the ships she so often watched were voyaging. She had read so much, and this man beside her had told her about them, that she longed to see and know them for herself.

He, too, was lost in reverie, and his thoughts seemed pleasing, for, as he looked at her with glowing eyes and flushed cheeks, a gleam of satisfaction and assurance crossed his face, and the soft smile curving his lips was hopeful.

As it occurred to Cecil how absent she was, she started and lifted her eyes quickly to the darker face above her, half expecting to read a reproach there. The satisfied smile, the ardent glance sent a richer crimson to her cheeks, and the long lashes drooped, veiling the bewilderment of the lustrous eyes.

Ralph Lowenstein caught her hand and pressed it passionately to his lips. The monotonous murmuring of the sea chimed a low symphony to the rapid beating of their hearts.

Cecil was nearly stifled with the emotion that swelled in her breast, so unprepared was she—so sudden was the passionate declaration that flowed unrestrained from

his lips. When he had finished Cecil breathed a deep sigh; she looked wildly around her as if to escape, then turned a glance full of pain and entreaty upon him; but he clasped her fondly to him.

"Cecil, Cecil, I love you!"

Cecil's brain reeled; it dawned upon her all at once how dear Ralph Lowenstein was to her, and the knowledge was very painful, very bitter to her aspiring heart—Ralph was poor! Her head lay upon his throbbing breast one delicious moment only. It was such a sweet pain to permit his loving embraces, and she loved him so! With a plaintive cry she tore herself away. She clasped her hands over her breast, her bright eyes wandered toward the north, and rested with one long full gaze upon Lowenstein Towers. Lonely and dismal enough the stately old mansion looked in the twilight gloom that surrounded it. A massive structure, supported on either side by a tower, whose solid masonry was nearly hidden by the ivy which clung to the stone work, standing darkly forth against the fading sky. To her Lowenstein Towers possessed all the attractions and romance of some ancient and grim castle; to be its proud mistress was the ambition that influenced her life. She dreamed of this in her waking hours by day, and in her sleep at night. Soon her dream was to be realized, for was she not the promised bride of Arch Lowenstein, Ralph's elder brother?

Ralph's gaze followed hers instinctively, and his face became overcast.

"Mine it is not," he said, as though in answer to her thoughts; "but you will be its only mistress, Cecil. Arch will never marry," reflectively. "Not mine, but Archie's—yet it is *home!*"

An arch smile curved her lips, chilling and treacherous.

"I will be its mistress in truth," she said; "I fear no rivalry. It may not seem so pleasant a home to you when I am Archie's bride!"

She had said it now, and she dared one swift glance upwards in his face. It was full of wild bewilderment. He more than half divined the import of her words, yet he dared not credit it. He still clung to a

straw of hope, trying to think he had *not* understood. His tones were half pleading, half fierce, as he demanded what she meant.

Cecil felt a shrinking shame, and her face flushed crimson under the searching penetrating glance that seemed to read her very soul.

"Only this, Ralph; what has this day passed between us must never be repeated. It must be blotted from our memory and our lives. O Ralph," she cried, covering her face in her excess of despair, "I am betrothed to your brother Archie!"

A cloud dark and dreadful crossed his face, but his tones were calm and dispassionate.

"Is this the truth, Cecil Villers? It shall never be! In faith, I think the sacrifice would be greater on my simple brother's part than yours. It would not be long before his watchful jealous eye detected his bride's duplicity, or the treacherous motives that influenced her to wed him. Fear not but that I will prevent such a marriage. Archie's happiness has been the study of my life; I care more for the peace of that simple tender heart than my own comfort. No, no, Cecil, you aspire too high! You must not forget what your position has been and is to his."

Cecil raised her head proudly.

"You will not have long to taunt me of my lowliness and obscurity!"

The day's last beam rested upon her shining amber hair. The disdainful curve of her red lips and the flashing defiant eyes made her appear both beautiful and repellent. He grasped both her slender snowy wrists like a vice.

"I do not taunt you, Cecil. Good God! how was I ever so deceived in your nature? I fancied that you loved me as I loved you, and I would have been proud to have claimed you as my wife. We part now with bitterest hatred. You have hurt me more deeply in trifling with Archie's tenderest feelings than the harm you have worked to myself. Believing you worthy, all my brightest hopes were centred upon the fond dream of possessing you; but now!— Cecil, hear me and believe me; Lowenstein Towers is forever out of your reach!"

His face was marked with determination. His delicate refined nostrils quivered with intense earnestness. He flung her hands

from him disdainfully. Cecil raised her arched brows just a trifle, shrugged her beautifully-rounded shoulders, smiled a smile both cunning and incredulous, but vouchsafed no reply. The next moment she stood alone, the breeze still fluttering her light dress, the damp of the twilight falling heavily upon her. She clasped her hands to her brow, and bit her lips to restrain the one long wailing cry that rose to them. Had she been too premature in disclosing her relation with Arch? Had she really the vital influence over him that he had confessed? Might not the brother's, after all, prove the stronger? Great God, to be foiled at last!

CHAPTER II.

THE checkered light from the oriel window streamed forth upon the fluttering leaves of the sweet-brier that clambered up to the low gothic roof where the swallows loved to build. The garden roses spent their sweet perfume on the night air, asking and receiving naught but their lovely glowing life in return. Among them wandered Cecil Villers, a restless anxious spirit. The deep blue vault above was loaded with stars, and in the faint light only a dim shadow wandered to and fro.

Within the cottage Cecil's mother was seated at a round table, upon which the light rested. She held an open book in her hand, and was calmly reading. Cecil's brain seemed on fire. She had sought the shelter of the dim garden to screen the workings of her unquiet soul. There was a hysterical rising in her throat; she longed to throw herself upon the dewy grass and weep. She felt a chilling despair creeping over her heart. Arch had promised her this night; but Arch had not come, though the hour was growing late, and the time sped faster and faster. What if she had placed an irretrievable barrier between herself and the man she loved, only to be foiled in reaching the prize she thought within her grasp! Should Ralph's impressive words prove prophetic, that Lowenstein Towers was forever beyond her reach! Ah, the thought drove her wild!

She crossed the flagged way between the cottage and the garden gate, and, lifting the iron latch, walked down the road to a point where she could view Lowenstein

Towers looming darkly; then hearing a footstep she hastened back, waiting breathlessly at the gate. A tall slender form slowly approached. She knew it well; it was Archie Lowenstein's, and mayhap he was coming to sever their engagement—and O, to be scorned by him! Her heart throbbed painfully; she pressed her hand over it closely to still its wild pulsations. Arch drew nearer and paused before her, with his long slender hand resting upon the iron paling of the gate.

"Arch!" she whispered, very faintly.

He lifted the latch and entered.

"I have frightened you; you are agitated, Cecil?" And he took her hands in his.

"No, no! I did not recognize you at first. Why are you so late? I feared there was something amiss at the Towers."

"You are interested so soon in what transpires at the Towers?" He spoke in such a queer way, without answering her question concerning his delay.

"Arch, do I not!" She did not finish her sentence, but covered her face with her hands; her slender frame trembled.

Archie's tone changed to one of ineffable tenderness, and he drew her gently to him.

"Cecil, I was detained by my brother Ralph. He had a great deal to say to me. Is what he said true? I want the truth, Cecil; you must not deceive me."

"What, O what?" cried she, in a voice of anxious dread, clasping her hands and looking beseechingly into his face.

"That you despise me—you consent to become mine only for the position and wealth I can give to you!" he aspirated, his voice full of intense suffering.

Cecil began to weep passionately, and he waited in wretched silence until she could recover herself sufficiently to speak.

"O Arch, you have broken my heart! I see that you no longer love me; and wish our engagement at an end. It shall be as you wish—we will say farewell forever," sobbed the artful girl.

Archie's tender heart could not resist her tears; he nearly wept himself, and he implored her not to grieve so.

"I have not changed, Cecil; it is you, I fear, who are not what you profess to be. O Cecil, I only want to know if you do care for me! I will ask for nothing but your love!" His voice was tremulous, and in the gloom Cecil did not see the tears

that swelled to his great boyish blue eyes.

"Some one has been trying to destroy me. Ah, if you would but believe me!" And her voice thrilled with pathos, as she raised her dark dewy eyes to his face.

"Good God, I will believe anything!" cried Archie, seized with rapture. "Say it, O say it, Cecil!"

She twined her soft arms around his neck, her heart beat against his, her white tear-stained face was upturned to his own.

"I love you, O I love you!"

She sacrificed truth and honor to gain her end. She never knew what it would cost until after it was said; then she felt her soul recoil. What would she not have given to have that lie unspoken! Forever, O forever, she must go on acting it! She had sold herself body and soul, and the price was Mammon. Already she felt the weight of remorseless chains, their icy fetters dragging her helpless spirit down—a wretched slave, forever denied the blessed boon of loving and being loved by one whom she could love.

Arch Lowenstein was frantic with an excess of joy. He laughed wildly, hysterically straining her to him, and pressing burning kisses upon her unresisting lips. She thought, while her whole being shrank from his embraces, "Great God, I am his! I have sold myself to one whom I loathe and abhor. It is not only this night I shall suffer the agony of his odious caresses, but through life. O Ralph, unworthy though I may be of your priceless love, the sacrifice and wretchedness are all on my side (when I consent to become Archie's), and not his! He is perfectly contented and happy, fed by the sweet poison of an untruth."

Cecil did not care to linger without, though the night was growing brighter, and Arch pleaded that they should remain in the sweet light a short time longer. Cecil could not repress a shudder, and complained of the damp night air. It was not damp, but Archie thought her chilly, and led her regretfully across the flagged way between the garden gate and half glass door leading into the small neat room, from which the light had shone forth. The room was vacant now, and Arch remained a few minutes later, clasping Cecil's cold hand in his, and speaking rapturously of their future.

When he was gone, Cecil flew to her

chamber, and throwing herself across the bed, gave herself up to the tide of overwhelming despair that rushed over her soul. Arch, wandering along the white beach, listening to the weird murmurings of the sea, was endeavoring to measure the breadth and depth of his great happiness rationally; but he only fell into a bewildering dream, and it was thus he encountered his brother Ralph. The dark look of hatred Arch cast upon him told him that he had lost and Cecil Villers won the day.

"But she is not his wife yet!" he muttered, fiercely, under his breath. And linking his arm within Archie's, he was about to propose that they should return to the Towers, when Archie, shaking off his light hold, struck him in the face.

"You are a base liar, and I hate you, Ralph Lowenstein! If you were not my brother, I would kill you for slandering the truest of women! We must part. My wife shall never be insulted by your presence. I hope you and I will never meet again!"

Ralph received the blow without a word; he would not raise his hand upon Arch—poor deluded Arch! But he was right; they must part now! And the two brothers went each a different way.

CHAPTER III

It was all over and past. Cecil Lowenstein stood there in the deep recess of the window, her gaze fixed upon a distant breaker creeping, and swelling, and creeping, until it broke again upon the beach.

Cecil was at the Towers, its mistress at last. They had just returned from a long bridal trip, and Cecil, tired of sight-seeing, tired of herself and of everything, was glad to get home, glad to rest. It seemed strange to her that this grand noble mansion should be her home, yet it was not like a dream; everything seemed very real to her. There was no adornment in her new home that wealth had not already supplied, and yet there was something wanting—something that seemed almost vital to her; something her life amidst all its gayety had missed, that rare gems and silken gowns could not satisfy. The golden fruit she had so much coveted was ashes to the taste. The splendor around her was depressing; the very air she breathed seemed stifling, and yet she would not

have gone back to the old life if she could; the old life, so lowly and obscure! Hers was a daring nature, and the judgment she had inflicted upon herself she bore with fortitude; there was no shrinking or turning back. It was rarely that she allowed herself to indulge in backward thoughts, though the void in her life was too painful not to be felt; and now that the bustle and excitement of the new life was over, the old days and the old love *would* come back to mock her, strive all she would to forget.

Archie's constant demonstrations of affection wearied her, and she could not control a feeling of repulsion and disgust whenever she was compelled to suffer his caress; but she kept up some sort of a show of affection, and Archie seemed satisfied. Such was the state of affairs, and Cecil only a few months a bride. She knew but too well how she had missed the fullest sum of earthly happiness.

She could not help thinking of it as she stood there in the deep embrasure of the window, looking out over the sparkling sea. The door opened and closed softly, but Cecil did not turn to behold the intruder. She felt by the creeping sensation who it was, and even when she felt his warm breath sweep her cheek, she still kept her gaze fixed upon the fleecy cloudlets that rolled away from the distant horizon and seemed to disappear beneath the sea. Her husband stood beside her.

"You see I have found you out even here. Why did you hide yourself in this remote chamber? Do you know this was Ralph's favorite?"

Cecil started, and a crimson glow suffused her cheeks, but she did not reply.

"See here; have you found this out yet?" he said, going to a great carved oak cabinet and opening one of its doors. He disclosed a portrait-painting, with its face turned inward. Archie turned it around; it was the face of his brother Ralph Lowenstein. Cecil gathered up the skirts of her long riding-habit (she had run off here as soon as dressed, only a few moments by herself.)

"O, it is your brother!" she said, carelessly. "Come, I am ready. Are the horses saddled yet?"

Arch left the portrait with its face outward, and followed his young wife, his blue eyes alight with pleasure.

Two hours later Cecil entered the same

room alone, and standing before the portrait, gazed long into the dark bewildering eyes that looked out at her from the lifeless canvas, until her own grew dim with unshed tears. Then she crept away softly, her light tread making only a faint echo as she descended the broad black staircase of shining oak.

The next day she came to look at it again, but the portrait was gone. Her face grew white.

"You will not find it," said a cruel voice at her side; and she turned to meet her husband's malignant glance. Cecil laughed one of her old defiant laughs.

"Another side to your nature exposed, my jealous lord! With what perfections are you not endowed?" And she swept past him with a queenly grace, her face haughty and fixed, and white as marble.

When Archie was left alone he paced the chamber frantically, striking his forehead with his hands, and muttering fiercely to himself in a most insane manner. His fine, soft, yellow hair was in wild disorder, and could Cecil have seen her wretched husband then, she must have pitied and soothed him.

Poor Arch! This was the gentle, affectionate, simple-hearted man Cecil had wed. And for what? To wreck her own life and his. Cecil, to escape her husband, filled the house with guests, and Lowenstein Towers rang with gay voices once again, and the long tapestried corridors, that had seemed so dismal and lonely a short time ago, gave back startling echoes to the light footsteps that raced merrily through them. The dingy old portraits that hung in the long gallery seemed to brighten up and look fresher; the atmosphere around was one of mirth and gayety.

And Cecil was the gayest of them all. She tried to forget herself; she strove to live entirely for enjoyment. Archie was not fond of society, and spent the greater part of his time in his large and elegant study. So Cecil was freer to flirt, and she did not miss any chance that offered. Still, strive as she would, she could not help hating her life, and she grew reckless, caring naught for what people might say of her, carrying on most daring and open flirtations before her husband's very face. And Arch, who was fiendishly jealous, seemed the most wretched miserable man alive.

There was one, Alonzo Bryant, whom Arch particularly disliked. Cecil had met him for the first time while abroad, and he had become completely captivated by her beauty and wit. He was one among the present guests at the Towers.

Cecil conceived a warm friendship for this man; she found him more diverting than any one she knew. Their tastes and ideas were similar, and a confidence sprang up between them that, though perfectly innocent, was suspicious. Cecil confided to him more of her unhappy married life than any wife should confide to another; but Cecil felt the need of such a friend as Alonzo, and in his sweet sympathy and friendship found a balm for her tortured spirit, and her heart grew lighter than it had been since her marriage.

By chance one twilight Cecil and Alonzo were alone together in the music-room. It was an oak-panelled chamber opening out of the western drawing-room, with an inlaid floor. Its appointments were various musical instruments, including a grand piano. At the latter Alonzo was seated, turning over some sheet music from a pile before him. Cecil stood near, robed in a dinner-dress of some rich lustreless silk, her snowy neck and arms bare, and adorned with costly gems. One exquisitely-rounded arm lay carelessly across the music sheets, and the dreamy dark eyes had wandered to the western windows that overlooked the sea. Alonzo's hand gently removed the arm as he withdrew the sheet from beneath. The contact sent the warm blood mounting to his cheek, and he felt his pulses bound. Cecil turned her face and their eyes met. His were instantly dropped upon the sheet he held before him. She wondered at his embarrassment. He placed the music upon the rack, and, striking the keys, played a low soft prelude.

"Sing it, Cecil."

He called her Cecil when they were alone together. She came closer, and rested her little snow-white hand upon his shoulder, while she sang:

"By the sad sea waves,
I listen while they moan a lament o'er graves
Of hopes and pleasures gone.
I was young, I was fair,
I had once not a care,
From the rising of the morn to the setting of the
sun;
Yet I pine like a slave,
By the sad sea wave,

Come again, bright days of hopes and pleasures
gone,

Come again, bright days,
Come again, come again!"

His voice caught up the refrain and mingled with hers. Cecil had an exquisite voice, and she never sang with more expression than then. When Alonzo's deeper tones chimed in hers trembled for a moment; but she caught up again, and they sang on to the end. The moonlight streamed in through the windows, lighting up the room with a soft and tender radiance. When they had finished, Alonzo looked up and saw that her face was very pale, and the drooped lashes sparkled with teardrops. He drew her face down to his and kissed away the tears. Then he pressed her closely to his breast.

"O my darling, how madly I love you!"

Cecil heard, but she spoke not a word. Her face was all flushed now; she broke away from him and fled from the room.

Cecil had not seen Arch that evening. It was after the occurrence in the music-room, and she sat alone in her chamber, tormented by fears that some one might have discovered them, feeling a guilty sort of feeling, and dreading every minute Archie's presence. She had not recovered from her agitation when her maid brought her a note. After she had dismissed the girl, she opened it with trembling fingers and palpitating heart. It was from Alonzo Bryant, and read thus:

"Forgive me, Cecil. I have offended you by my mad confession, but God knows I meant you no harm. I do love you hopelessly, and I would sacrifice my life to spare you one moment's pain. I cannot tell you what torture I suffer to see you pining day after day. It seems as if I must snatch you from your present misery, shield you from *that man* (forgive me again, Cecil), and see you happy in the warmth and light of a fond true love, that should surround and lighten all your days. Such would my love be to you, Cecil; but, good heavens, I must not speak of it! I must leave you; I cannot stay, and I know you will not wish it after this; but I beg, I entreat of you, to grant me one interview more—just to say farewell! I will be discreet; I will say nothing that can wound you.

"A. BRYANT."

Cecil was as pale as death. She had just concealed the note in her breast when

Archie entered. His face was unusually haggard, and there was a dogged sullen look in his eye. To some remark Cecil made he answered her harshly. He strode across the room to his dressing-case, and taking a revolver was hastily leaving the room, when a low cry from Cecil caused him to stop. She sprang forward and clasped his arm with both her hands, and raised a pale agitated face to his.

"Archie, Archie, what are you about to do?"

"Nothing," he answered, sullenly; and he did not meet her eye. He shook her rudely off and advanced to the door. Cecil sprang forward and barred the way.

"Archie, you must tell me what you intend to do with that revolver." Her voice trembled so she could hardly speak.

"I told you once, nothing!" He forcibly pushed her aside and left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

At the breakfast-table Alonzo Bryant announced his intended departure that day. It was received with regret by nearly all, as he was quite a favorite. Cecil Lowenstein could not eat; she only made a pretence of it; her food seemed to choke her. Her usually pale face looked haggard to practised eyes like Alonzo's, and he could not help a secret thrill of happiness in thinking her wan looks were owing to their coming separation. In an ecstasy of spirit he thought, "I am not wholly indifferent to her. Thank God, when I am gone she will think of me sometimes—I shall not be forgotten!"

After the joyless meal (joyless to Cecil) was over, a number had gathered in the music-room.

"You must sing us a farewell song, Alonzo!" cried several gay voices. And a charming trio of feminine loveliness gathered around him to tease him for a song. Alonzo went to the piano reluctantly. He was longing to have a chance of interview with Cecil, and chafed at delay. "By the Sad Sea Waves" rested upon the rack where they had left it the night before.

"Mrs. Lowenstein, I am not in good voice to-day; will you be kind enough to help me through the song?" he said, turning to Cecil. Cecil drew near.

"I would prefer to listen to you alone. I am afraid I could not render it with justice this morning."

"What absurdity!" said one; "you must sing, Cecil, your voice blends perfectly with his. Now do sing, Cecil, please."

Cecil, thus urged, began the song that had so affected both her and Alonzo the night before; but after she had sung a few lines her voice failed, and Alonzo proceeded alone. A minute after, Cecil vanished from the room. She crept away to the oak-parlor, and listened breathlessly to his deep sonorous voice that came wafted through the open windows to her.

"I awake in my grave by the sad sea wave:
Come again, dear dream, so peacefully that smiled;
Come again, dear dream,
Come again, come again!"

His last tones died away; she stood at the open window, bending slightly forward, and listening for his voice again; but another had taken his place now, and, weak with excitement, Cecil sank down in a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

"Alas! my dear and only friend, what shall I do when you are gone?"

She had spoken aloud, not thinking one beside herself had heard. Her hands were drawn gently down, and Alonzo was kneeling at her feet.

"Cecil, I must say it! I do not think it wrong—you are so wretched here, and we might be so happy away. Fly with me!"

Cecil started to her feet, her dark eyes dilating with terror.

"O no, no, no! We indeed must part, and forever. Why did you say it, Alonzo, to embitter my last remembrance of you? Go! You must speak to me no more!"

Alonzo caught her hands and covered them with burning kisses.

"I will obey you, my queen!"

What mad delusion had hurried him on to say those, meaningless words! Arch Lowenstein stood in the doorway, looking in upon them. Cecil, terrified by Alonzo's words and manner, had snatched her hands away, and thought to fly from the room, when she perceived her husband standing there. She stood, with dilating eyes, frozen to the spot. She could not utter a single word in vindication. Archie's face was demoniac. His raging soul burned through the wildly-flashing eye. He entered slowly, closed the door, and locked it. Then, drawing a revolver, faced Alonzo Bryant.

"For God's sake!—Arch—" Arch quickly interrupted him.

"No, don't you call me that! I am to have a reckoning with you." His words

were measured and slow. Cecil regained her faculties, and sprang to her husband's side, but he kept her forcibly away with one hand. She trembled violently.

"Archie, my husband, pray hear my explanation—"

"No, I will hear nothing. Cecil, false woman, be still! Now, Alonzo Bryant, we are quits!"

As he said this, the startling report of a pistol-shot sounded through the room—another, and when the smoke had cleared away, Cecil Lowenstein beheld her lover and her husband lying at her feet. With one long terrified cry she sank upon the floor in a deadly swoon.

V.

CECIL LOWENSTEIN was seated in the library, where a cheerful fire was blazing. It was dark and dismal without, and there was a hoarse melancholy murmur of the sea, painfully audible in that closed snug room. The rain all day had beat steadily down upon the battlemented roof of Lowenstein Towers. Cecil was very lonely and miserable; she tried to content herself with a book, but memory was too busy at work, and she found it impossible to chain her attention. Once toward sundown she walked to the window, but low gray clouds shut out the distance. The constant drip drop of the rain on the stone terrace beneath made her nervous and impatient. She was almost wild with *ennui*, and she wanted to get away from herself.

As night settled down upon the Towers, Cecil became more restless and lonely, and despairing how to pass a long evening, thought her of the music-room. She had not entered it once since that day of the tragedy, long months ago. So Cecil ordered that the registers should have fires, and to be notified when the room was rendered comfortable.

Cecil took her maid with her for company, but she could not help a shiver when she first entered the room. She unlocked the piano, and found it in tolerably good tune. After the first touch of the keys, Cecil became interested. She was very fond of playing, and continued from memory, not noting the time. By-and-by she commenced looking over some of her old music. Susan had fallen asleep in her chair, and Cecil was comparatively alone. What possessed her to take up that old

song she knew not. She placed it upon the rack in a sort of dream, and began to sing it. She felt terrified when she found her voice echoing those last words she had heard Alonzo Bryant sing, while his voice came wafted to her through the open windows of the oak-parlor:

"I awake in my grave by the sad sea wave:
Come again, dear dream—"

Her voice faltered, and ceased; her hands fell crashing upon the keys. A tall form stood near the doorway leading from the western drawing-room. He approached still nearer into the light of the chandelier; he threw aside his heavy cloak, and Cecil sprang to her feet with a cry. It was Ralph Lowenstein. He stood there before her with arms folded across his breast, and spoke never a word. Cecil held out her hands. "Ralph! Ralph!"

Still that cruel silence, and the dark scornful eyes that seemed to burn into her very soul. She trembled so that she could hardly stand, and sank again upon the piano stool.

This was the man she loved—who had once loved her; but he scorned her now—would not give her one word!

"O Ralph, forgive me—speak to me! I am so, so wretched!"

"When you can recall my brother from his grave?" His voice seemed so vehement, so harsh! She clasped her hands in an ecstasy of despair.

"O Ralph! he was mad. He would not listen to me. The greatest wrong I ever did him was to wed with him when my whole heart belonged to another."

"Your whole heart?" ironically.

"You are so cruel, Ralph! Indeed, I loved you better than I ever dreamed I could love. The wealth that I coveted so ardently, when mine, never gave me happiness. I tried not to be harsh to Archie, but my married life was very, very wretched. I know you will say I deserved it all, but O! I do not think I merited quite the misery that I suffered."

Cecil covered her face and wept.

"But that cannot palliate all that Archie suffered. That cannot relieve you of the crime of his death. You murdered your husband as much as though you pointed the fatal weapon at his breast with your own hands. If I knew my forgiveness would spare your life, I would still withhold it. I loved you once, Cecil Villers, but I despise—I abhor you now!"

Cecil's only answer was a little wounded cry. There was a silence of a few minutes, and then Ralph Lowenstein spoke again:

"You may wonder why I am here. You have borne to Archie no heir, and this estate passes entirely out of your hands. You are aware, perhaps, the present master—"

"Is Ralph Lowenstein! And that I am indebted to you for this present shelter. I am indeed aware of it, and that I must rely on your hospitality this night. On the morrow I will relieve you of the presence of your brother's bountiless wife!"

"Not quite so hard as that, Cecil; you have a fair income fastened to you through life. But I am glad you comprehend your position at the Towers so well, and have decided to leave it. Its new mistress—my wife—will be introduced to it soon, and I believe I am right in judging that it would not be pleasant for you to meet her."

This was the last blow to Cecil. For this she had denied herself the honest love of the only man that she felt could have brought her happiness; had sold herself to a man she detested, bringing utter misery and ruin upon both, only at the last to find herself forced back into the old, hated, lowly position from which she had started, but with a heavier heart, and a darkened, ruined life. All this passed like a flash through her mind, and she recognized the retribution.

Ralph was surprised at her silence. He had expected that she would weep and rave; he did not guess the blank despair that was crushing her heart, and that sealed her lips. Very white and still, she sat there with the light of the chandelier shining on her amber-golden hair, and the listless jewelled hands crossed upon her lap; the lustreless eyes drooped, the pale lips compressed. Ralph for one moment felt a strange pity for the woman who had once so scornfully rejected his love—who had brought so much disgrace upon the fair fame of the proud, honorable Lowensteins. Then his heart chilled toward her, and he was pitiless still.

He caught up his cloak and threw it across his arm, then turned and addressed her once again:

"I will say 'good-night' and 'adieu.' I shall return again in a few days; but by then you will have left the Towers. If you have any advice or aid to ask regarding your future, command me; I am at your service—"

He paused, but she simply bowed her regal head.

"Farewell, then, we shall not meet again?"

"Thank God!" burst from her lips; and Ralph, with a cruel smile and a low mocking bow, left the apartment.

* * * * *

Cecil Lowenstein sat at the oriel window, the sunlight glinting through the fluttering leaves of the sweet-brier, and casting a tremulous light across her white dress and the polished floor. Her delicate skin was waxen in its fairness, and a bright burning spot glowed on either cheek. The lovely yellow hair was bound simply back from the marble brow, and the only ornament of her dress was a crimson rose fastened at her breast. She sat there in the low rocker till the sunset faded and the twilight came. The full moon arose, and its silvery beams crept through the window and open door, flooding the room with a soft mellow light. She was so deep in reverie that she did not hear the latch of the garden gate, but was startled by a voice from the garden singing the old favorite—"By the Sad Sea Waves." It was Alonzo's own voice; and she started to her feet with clasped hands and wildly palpitating heart.

"Cecil! Cecil!"

Alonzo Bryant stood in the doorway. In the first moment Cecil thought it was his spirit, and nearly sank to the floor; but Alonzo sprang forward and clasped her in his arms.

Although the shot Arch Lowenstein had fired at his own breast had proved fatal, not so with Alonzo. Indeed, it had proved nearly so, but after a long and dangerous illness, he had recovered. Cecil had never heard of his recovery, and had supposed that he had died. Hence the terror of his unexpected presence. She sank into his arms sobbing.

"O Alonzo! is this really, really you?"

"It is really I, Cecil. I have come to claim you and take possession, my darling."

The lovers sat down in the soft entrancing moonlight, and told all that had befallen them since their last meeting, and spoke hopefully of the future. And Cecil with tears confessed how she had once loved Ralph Lowenstein—the wicked avarice that had caused her to marry the simple brother whom she heartily despised.

Alonzo heard her in solemn silence. A

cloud seemed to cross his horizon while she spoke of her wretched past, but it was soon dispelled by her assurance of a deep undying affection for himself, and that she had thoroughly repented of the evil ways of her past, and would be happy to spend her days with him in the lowliest cottage. Alonzo pressed her rapturously to his heart, and told her of the beautiful home to which he should take her, and far away from the "Sad Sea Waves" of her past. The happy tears flowed down her pale cheeks, and she moaned piteously at her fate. That if she could only live to make him happy!—but that the sands of her life were nearly run.

"You do not know it, but I am dying; the sorrow and disappointment of my wasted life have hastened me on to my doom. Alonzo, I have a fatal disease. I fear I shall never see the dear happy home you speak of, but will find my last resting-place by these 'sad sea waves.' Look at this poor wasted hand, Alonzo!" And she raised a thin transparent hand to the moonlight. Alonzo took it and pressed it to his lips. "There is not much life left in these decaying veins. And before you came, I prayed that the end might be quickened. It seemed so long! so long! Now, O God! if I could live! I can see what a happy, noble life I might yet live with you to share it; but it cannot be!"

She ceased to speak; her breath came gaspingly, and she lay upon his breast pale and exhausted.

"Great God! And so I win you at last, only to lose you? Cecil, my life, my darling, do not die. I want you so!"

Cecil's end was not quite so soon. She lived to become the bride of Alonzo, but never to see that distant happy home he described so eloquently to her.

"I am O so happy now! and I do not mind it that I shall rest near the 'sad sea waves.' The sea, 'It keeps eternal whisperings round desolate graves!' But you will come and visit it sometimes; and you must not grieve, my Alonzo, when I am gone. I think I could sleep more peacefully if I knew you were not unhappy. Sing to me the old song, dearest, for through it I first learned your priceless love."

Through the stillness of the room rang his voice, low and tremulous. He had finished, and bent above her tearfully, but Cecil was no more.

CAPTAIN ALICK'S LEGACY.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

CHAPTER I.

A PORTLY elderly gentleman was slowly pacing along the nicely-kept gravelled walk which cut a rich brown semi-circle in the velvety green of a small lawn in front of a neat substantial cottage. The air of the man suited that of the place. He was dressed with extreme neatness; his iron-gray hair was smoothly brushed, his slightly darker beard trimly cut, his boots polished to a charm, and his linen immaculate; and yet there was nothing about him that would strike you as singularly incongruous if he had chosen to take the hoe or shovel and go to the assistance of the stout serving-man who was busily at work in the vegetable garden behind the cottage. A man who had been steady and brave to face any experience, however trying, who had known something of privation and hardship while he had been at ease midst luxury and refinement; who had borne his part resolutely amidst many strange and startling scenes, for all he walked so quietly now along the walk before his simple cottage home. This one read, half unconscious of the discovery, while gazing at the firm, dignified, and yet benevolent face.

Captain Alick Thurston was a man to inspire respect, whether from high or low, rich or poor, refined or ignorant persons. There was a natural inborn authority in his very gesture which could not fail of effect. Those calm blue eyes could glint sparks as fierce as those from clashing steel; the lips, somewhat irresolute and tremulous just now, could shut down into the grimdest determination; that smooth shapely hand, wrinkled though it had grown with the years of half a century, had still an iron grip or ponderous blow at command of the firm-strung muscles. He was not a man to be lightly held by friend or foe; nor tamely loved, one would say, seeing what tender depths those blue eyes now and then revealed. And yet Captain Alick had never married. A stout-framed, resolute housekeeper, Widow Nancy Bourne,

held sway at Thurston Cottage, and had reigned triumphant in that—to her—glorious sphere fifteen years come Christmas. And though Captain Alick was famed for many a mile as a generous, attentive host to his own sex, and a devoted slave to all the children in the neighborhood, it was very seldom that a lady was included in the list of his invited guests. It was tacitly conceded by all his acquaintance that he was not a marrying man; yet, somehow, no one thought of accusing him of antipathy or hostility to his fair friends. Whatever in the past had wrenched away from him the sweet solace and joy of a wife's affection, which, of all others, a nature like his seemed to require, from Captain Alick's lips came no hint or explanation.

Widow Nancy was secure from molestation; and, it must be conceded, managed the liberal means given over to her care in the most judicious manner. A better-kept table was not found in the whole shire, and a guest might search far and wide, and fail of securing more palatable or delicious dishes than mine host of Thurston Cottage distributed from his seat at the head of the board.

But we have left him all this time waiting the arrival of a guest, whose coming has evidently excited unusual interest; since he has left his seat on the cosy piazza to come down to the walk, every now and then glancing questioningly toward the avenue gate.

He is gratified at length by the sound of rolling wheels, and turns his head with a quick start, while there comes a thoughtful half-tremulous smile across his lips.

A handsome but very plainly-appointed coach comes moderately up the avenue. Captain Alick is ready to open the coach door when it draws up before the front flight of stone steps. A tall gentleman, something near his own age, attired in the extreme of elegance, descends, and extends a thin hand, from which he had just drawn a delicate lavender glove.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by THOMAS & TALBOT, Boston, Mass., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington.]

"Well, captain, you are hale and hearty, I see. I was afraid you were going into a decline, that was such a forlorn, solemn sort of letter which summoned me here."

"O, I am well enough, and I perceive you are very little changed, Dick! It's rather shabby in you, old boy, that I should have to send to get you here at Thurston Cottage," says Captain Alick, grasping the outstretched hand, and shaking it heartily.

"O, you know how tied I am. What with my private affairs, and my Parliament duties, there's little enough time for recreation. I put aside a dozen calls to get down here now, because, somehow, your letter gave me to understand your reasons were urgent and important."

As he spoke, the Honorable Richard Merton looked sharply and questioningly, with his piercing gray eyes, into the smiling face before him.

"You are not far from right, Dick. I had my good reasons for urging the visit; so don't repent before you have actually crossed my threshold. It will do you good to get a little whiff of country air and a moment's rest from 'cankerous cares.' You are the same restless soul, Dick. I wonder you haven't fretted the spirit from the body. You're more woefully like a shadow than ever. But come in, come in, Dick! I'm all alone. I've saved myself especially for your benefit. Widow Nancy will give us dinner a little earlier than usual, in consideration of the appetite your long ride must have induced."

They passed into the house arm in arm, the plain-spoken, great-hearted, simple-minded country gentleman, and the worldly, wily, deep-learned city politician.

The conversation was desultory and careless until after the dinner, to which the Honorable Mr. Merton had done ample justice, was removed, and the nut and wine-tray set before them. Then suddenly dropped away from Captain Alick's face the bland genial smile of the host. He filled his guest's glass, and slowly drained his own, then looked over the table with grave, almost wistful eyes.

"Now, then, at last I am to hear an explanation of this odd whim," thought the Honorable Mr. Merton; and looked up with eager attention.

"Dick," began Captain Alick, "we have been good friends all our lives, haven't

we? I am sure I have loved you as well as I could have loved a brother. When I was a foolish youngster, I made brother, and sister, and parent of you. Why, Dick, you ruled me like a tutor in those old days, and I was hot-blooded and impetuous, and full of all a boy's pride and obstinacy, too. I have wondered, sometimes, as I recalled my unfaltering devotion, and tried to guess out the causes. Being such a desolate wretch, with no home friends, and brought up by my guardian with such chilling sternness, would naturally, I suppose, throw a warm-hearted boy into the arms of the first kind-hearted person who took pains to win his affection. And you had wonderful tact, Dick; you have always had that, boy and man."

Captain Alick's eye was a little hazy, his tone grew dreamy; and he talked on like one unconscious of a listener.

Richard Merton glanced sharply across the table, just the slightest shade of annoyance crossed his thin sallow face, and his lip curled in a faint sneer. He took up the silver nutcrackers carefully, selected the finest walnut, and, as he crushed the shell, replied, in an unconcerned tone:

"Really, captain, so many things have come between in all these years, that I cannot recall anything accurately concerning those old days. With me bygones are indeed bygones."

"The past is more a living truth to me than the present. I live here alone in peace and quiet, and ponder over every little circumstance in the lives of some who have been lying in their graves these fifteen years. I lose myself in trying to fathom the mystery of the Father's dealings with us. Why are the wicked allowed to work their evil deeds? why are the pure and innocent left to perish in such woeful straits?"

The sneer on the Honorable Richard's thin lips increased visibly.

"The man is a monomaniac!" thought he, shrugging his shoulders.

Captain Alick caught something of this, and hastily flinging back with one hand the iron-gray masses of hair which swept across his forehead, he spoke suddenly, and in an entirely changed voice:

"Dick, I have learned at last the truth concerning Miriam Grey."

The Honorable Richard Merton started, now in good earnest. A wave of crimson

sent a momentary flush to his sallow cheek. He lifted his eyelids, and the shrewd sharp eyes darted a hasty glance into the speaker's face, as if in search of a guiding hint concerning his own course. He met the sorrowful but kind calm look of Captain Alick with a nervous trepidation his best efforts could not conceal.

"Really, Alick, I am not quite sure I understand you. You know I said before I had forgotten all those old affairs!" stammered he.

"I think a little effort will enable you to recall the facts. I said I had learned the truth, Dick. So you will understand that I realize now the folly of my unquestioning confidence in your friendship. But, Dick, man, times are changed; you are right there. If this discovery had come thirty, or even twenty years ago, instead of having you out here at Thurston Cottage, I should have sent you a peremptory summons to take your choice of weapons. Young blood is so hot; but mine is creeping sluggishly now, Dick. I don't want to leave the world with bitterness and hatred in my heart. When, a month gone, I learned how treacherously you dealt with me, when I thought of my barren, desolate life, of my poor Miriam's wretched, wretched history, I own I cursed you. But calmer thoughts followed. It is strange how I have always clung to you, Dick; how warm a return I have given to your cold liking! I sat down, and began hunting up extenuating circumstances to plead your cause. I said it is not so very unnatural. Dick was always such an ambitious fellow, his marriage with Annabel Graeme seemed to set him upon the ladder to success. If he refused to conciliate her brother, he lost this much-desired wife. I told over to myself just how you reasoned. You always had such a lawyer brain, Dick. I know you said it would be the best thing for me, that I was a giddy boy, ready to lose all my best prospects for the sake of an obscure and penniless girl. You said it was the best thing to put the girl out of my path. O Dick! Dick! You meant to do me a kindness, but you blasted my whole life! hers— Man! man! it drives me frantic to recall it!"

Captain Alick dropped his face, on which the great drops of perspiration had started, into his hands, and a great sob shook his broad chest. The Honorable Richard

looked on, half curious, half angry, thoroughly discomfited.

"But, Alick," ventured he, "you seem to take for granted the truth of some unknown accusation. Who has dared thus secretly malign me?"

"Hush, Dick! Don't try to cheat me longer. You will lose my still clinging affection. I tell you, man, across all these yawning years I cannot reach back to the hot passions of boyhood. I bear you no anger. You see that I have sent for you in friendliness. I give you the privilege of helping me right what wrong lies in your power. I know the whole miserable story; how you helped Gilbert Graeme dupe and cheat me, how you poisoned my Miriam's sweet trustfulness and drove her into his arms, to win his sister for yourself. Thank Heaven! she was saved from the foulest wrong. She escaped, she fled. She was lost to me who might have been the joy and pride of my life, but she escaped from the vile clasp of Gilbert Graeme."

Richard Merton winced, but he put on an aggrieved tone.

"Alick, who has been talking to you? From whence do you get this strange absurd story?" cried he, stretching across the table his long thin hand.

"I have it from one who has never lied—from the grave itself, from my Miriam's dying message!" was the stern low-breathed reply.

The outstretched hand, blazing with the magnificent seal ring stamped with the Merton crest, fell heavily to the table. The honorable gentleman's sallow cheek wore a still more livid tinge. The eyelids dropped over the crafty steel-cold eyes. He was overwhelmed with confusion. Sorrowfully and gravely Captain Alick's eyes followed the shifting emotions of his face.

"You see, Dick," said he presently, "we are to talk as if you agreed to my views of the case. I am certain you repent heartily the unkind part you acted toward me. Believe me, after the first pangs were over I should have dug a grave and buried the ugly recollection out of sight. You would never have known from me of my discovery, but for the reparation presented to you, but for the atonement lying in your power."

"What is it?" asked the other, in a husky voice.

"Listen! Miriam escaped from the trap

that aristocratic villain set for her. Believing me false, and well nigh losing her faith in mankind, she fled, covering carefully every vestige of her track. She lived as companion to an elderly invalid in Sicily, three dreary years. Her protectress dying, left her a moderate competence. Still keeping an assumed name, to shield her from a nameless dread of Sir Gilbert Greame, she lived in the little foreign town in strict retirement. A singular train of circumstances brought her in contact with a wealthy Englishman, sent to that mild air to favor delicate lungs. I need not dwell upon the particulars. He discovered the same attractions which held me under so close a spell, and threw himself at her feet. He offered her the protection of an honorable name and manly heart. She was alone, friendless, nearly broken-hearted. She accepted the staff put beneath her trembling hands. She married him, living as quietly as suited her tastes and his feeble health. He died two years afterward, very suddenly, and when she came forward as his wife, the foreign agent of his family coolly put her claims aside. They declared there had been no marriage, that it was tacitly understood by all his acquaintance she was merely the mistress selected to solace the failing health of the invalid. They offered a moderate pension, but persistently refused to recognize her. She spurned this insulting proffer, and sought for proofs. To her horror, she found every trace of the performance of the legal ceremony carefully obliterated. The very clergyman was nowhere to be found. She knew nothing about him, excepting that he was a Scotchman, who said he had left his pulpit for a brief vacation. His name was very carelessly written upon the certificate he gave them. She remembered her husband's remarking it; but she was very positive it was signed John Maclean, and that he came from Edinburgh. The defiant tone of her communications from her husband's family disgusted as well as distressed her. She knew the priceless papers must have been stolen from their desk during the confusion ensuing upon his sudden death. Her first efforts proving unavailing, having no trusty friend to turn to, this poor forlorn creature—created, Dick, to adorn and beautify any sphere in life, you must bear me out in that assertion—passively acquiesced in her

hard fate. She had her little year-old babe to comfort her, and the yearly annuity paid by the terms of her benefactress's will would keep her from poverty. So she settled down in that strange town upon the Mediterranean shore. The child growing up towards womanhood, aroused again her anxiety that the truth should be proved, and her rights demanded. By a blessed providential discovery she at last learned how cruelly she had been betrayed, and how miserably I had been cheated. She says, in her touching letter, that it roused all her failing strength. She knew she could rely upon my help. With her dying blessing, she sent to my care her precious child and her injured cause."

Captain Alick paused, and looked over anxiously into the face of his guest. It was half averted, but showed trace of emotion, which gave him much encouragement.

"Dick," he exclaimed, impulsively, "Miriam is dead and gone! it is hopeless to seek to help her to her own rights; but we can grant her dying wish. We can give her child her rightful heritage. I am an unlearned, blunt old sailor. I am afraid I should bungle at the matter; such things are out of my line. I see that it needs adroit, delicate handling, or matters will be injured instead of benefited. I can work straightforward, but I am at loggerheads directly I try to set sly traps. It is just the thing for you, Dick; you never failed in your life at such a job. Will you undertake it? Mind, all the expense shall be taken from my purse if you fail. If you succeed, this dear little girl can well afford to recompense you generously from that noble property."

"You have not told me what estate it is to which the claim is laid?" said the Honorable Richard, picking up a walnut, and meditating a move toward the nutcrackers.

His host was evidently a little embarrassed. One hand had been nervously fidgeting a small roll of paper in the pocket of his loose sacque coat. He drew it out now, glanced over the lines hastily, and, turning down the edge of the paper, laid it down on the table before the other's eye.

The walnut fell as suddenly as if a blow had fallen upon those long slim fingers, and rolled across the table, falling with a light bound to the polished oaken floor.

"Confusion!" exclaimed the honorable gentleman, in a startled angry voice.

"I know you are surprised, Dick. You did not think you were once more crushing poor Miriam, when your prompt diplomacy settled so decisively that 'foreign upstart claim upon Wilmot's property,' and the old place?"

"Captain Alick Thurston, this is really too much!" exclaimed Richard Merton, starting up from the table. "I certainly did not come down here to meet with insult. You have been imposed upon. You were always too quixotic. I tell you that Miriam was a cheat—you were well rid of her—"

"Hold!" thundered Captain Alick, also leaping from his chair. "Beware, Dick Merton how you use that sacred name lightly. I tell you the girl was as much my wife, in the sight of Heaven, as though forty priests had stood over us. Our hearts were exchanged, our nuptial vows uttered solemnly, in the Almighty presence. Through all these years I have borne around a bereaved empty breast. She has turned to me fearlessly, from her very bed of death. Dick! Dick! how can I have loved you so? Is your heart a stone indeed? Have all these years of familiar intercourse with trickery, and fraud, and giant wrongs, crushed out from you a man's honor? I had counted strongly on your help. I thought you would gladly make this atonement, to ease the nightmare remorse which it seemed must weigh heavily on your soul. Once more I appeal to you, in the name of all things sacred, to help me in this matter. I know it will be hard. I think I understand the sorest point. But, Dick, money is not everything in this world; surely you must have seen that. And you will have enough. You are well aware that everything I have is left to you and yours. My will is still unchanged; but, Dick, I must certainly make a new one, if you persist in denying the claim of this hapless orphan. Miriam's child must not be left to the chance of winning her right. From this day she is my adopted daughter. But you will consent, Dick?"

He stood up erect, his eye flashing, his noble face illumined with a grand enthusiasm, and before him was the livid sneering countenance of his guest.

"Say you will consent to help me, Dick?" pleaded Captain Alick.

"I do not believe a word of her story. 1

think I should be wronging the innocent if I wrested the estate from my ward's hands. You know—or perhaps you do not know—that he is as good as engaged to my daughter."

"I suspected it; but it does not alter the matter. Why should it?"

The wily man of the world had by this time, in a measure, recovered the wits which had been sadly routed by this sudden and astounding revelation. He rallied all his faculties, and slowly returned to his seat.

"Let us try to look at the affair coolly," said he, in his accustomed smooth and oily tones. "It is possible I may see it differently. I must have a little quiet reflection, to know exactly what is right."

"Heaven grant you may find it! and to add another, and, to me, irresistible appeal, let me summon one more interested than either of us."

He rang the bell as he spoke, and said quietly to the servant who appeared:

"Ask Widow Nancy to say to the young lady that I should feel honored by her presence here for a few moments."

The servant disappeared, and the pair waited in silence full fifteen minutes; then quick light steps were heard coming through the hall. The host smiled softly, and, as if to brush off all traces of sternness and agitation from his face, passed his hand hastily across forehead, cheek and mouth. The guest cast an uneasy, disturbed glance toward the door, and then involuntarily rose to his feet.

CHAPTER II.

You have seen faces, oftener in pictures than elsewhere, but at rare intervals, in reality, which affected you with a vague and yet very distinct sensation of mingled awe and delight. Such sweet serene light shone in the eyes, such a depth of purity hovered around the tranquil lips, such an indescribable refinement, and goodness, and innocence, shone through every lineament.

This young girl who came floating through the dark-panelled doorway toward these two men of such widely different character and experience, was of just such lovely presence. Her very coming seemed to brighten the room, as a sunbeam or a blossom can enliven the gloomiest scene.

Even the fierce angry clamoring in Richard Merton's worldly heart cowered down, and for a moment held its peace, while his host, with a thrilling smile, rose to meet her.

"You sent for me, Captain Alick. If there is anything I can do for you, I shall be so glad; but I fear there is no way in which I may repay your goodness."

The voice was sweet and clear, the accent slightly foreign. Captain Alick took in his the wee white hand, and answered, fondly:

"Nay, my child, you must forget this thought of obligation. Have I not adopted you into my heart as a beloved daughter? Is not your very presence in this dull old place the richest largess I could ask? Come hither, my child. Here is an old comrade of mine; one who shared all my boyish life, who has always held a warm corner in my heart. This is Mr. Richard Merton, Genevieve."

This girl, reared in the utmost seclusion, wholly unlearned in the courtly etiquette upon which the ladies of his acquaintance prided themselves, turned toward him with a graceful unconsciousness, which the Honorable Richard inwardly admitted was the very perfection of lady-like ease.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Merton. Captain Alick is so kind to me, I already love him so dearly, that I cannot but choose take his friend for mine upon the first meeting."

"I hope you will find him a good and generous friend," said Captain Alick, while Mr. Merton bowed his acknowledgment of Genevieve's address. "You see we have been discussing grave and knotty questions over our wine. Will you come into the little parlor, and charm away the cobwebs with one of those sweet melodies you warble like any forest birdling?"

"I shall be too proud and happy. I will do my best. How glad I am you love singing!"

She led the way joyfully, and with unaffected readiness seated herself at the piano, and commenced a sweet Italian hymn, giving the words in English. The gentlemen could do no otherwise than listen attentively. Her voice was wonderfully sweet, and had evidently been carefully cultured. She sang song after song, now and then glancing around with a pleased smile to mark the rapt enchanted look on her friend's face.

"I am sure you are tired," said Captain Alick, at last.

She shook her head playfully, but he continued, peremptorily:

"Not another note. I must not be too extravagant, even in so pure an enjoyment. Run away, birdling, and ask Widow Nancy to look out for the honey jars, since I am quite confident you feed surreptitiously upon them to obtain the dulcet tone for your songs."

Laughing merrily, Genevieve withdrew.

Captain Alick looked over triumphantly into his guest's face.

"You cannot blame me now, Dick, for my earnest desire to restore to so peerless a creature the rightful fortune and noble name of her father. She will be the brightest star at court."

"Does she know herself of this claim? She is indeed a very charming girl. But, Alick, in such an important matter one must move cautiously and deliberately. The subject requires careful consideration."

"She knows nothing. It is five weeks now since she arrived, and I have scarcely thought of any other subject. There is no need of further consideration on my part," returned the captain, impatiently.

"But certainly there is on mine. I am of a slower, less impetuous nature. Let me have the papers to read to-night when I retire to my chamber. I promise you to give it careful thought, and in the morning you shall know my candid opinion."

"I don't want your opinion. I want your answer, yes or no. Will you help right this defrauded orphan?"

"If you like that statement better, you shall have my ay or nay in the morning."

"Very well. You understand those papers are merely copies. The main thing is to find this Scotch minister; then, of course, the matter is settled. Perhaps you already know something about him. You certainly were the principal manager of the affair, and the guardian of the successful heir."

Captain Alick said this half defiantly, half apologetically, and kept his eye resolutely upon Richard Merton's face.

It kept its impulsive coldness. He was no longer to be startled into impulsive or undignified emotions.

"I am certain you don't mean your words as unkind as their real significance

implies. It's a long time since we have been together, Alick, and it's not often I get away from public business, say nothing of my own. Let's be good friends, if we can, Alick?"

So spoke this wily schemer, well knowing how deeply such a tone and thought would sink into the honest generous heart beside him.

"Amen to that, Dick! What an old-time genial ring it has, when you call me Alick in that voice! It brings up the days when we were at school together, and when nothing in the world could make me so proud as a patronizing nod or wink from you. You were so much cleverer at books than I, Dick, you rogue; but when it came to wrestling or pulling the oars, I got ahead again, old boy. Our lives might have been mapped out then from those very traits. I hated deep problems heartily, and took to the water as naturally as a duck. Heigh-ho! well, I have done some good in my line, while in the service. It's a question, though, if I should have been so snugly harbored in retirement, if I had depended upon my country's appreciation of my services. But I have always rejoiced heartily to see you mounting so steadily upward, and have been proud to know how quick you could unravel what seems to be such a hopeless snarl in the political affairs of the nation. Yes, yes, Dick, let's be friends always."

"How fast it is growing dark! Shall we try a cigar on the terrace? I'm sure you haven't given up your old sea habits, as regards a pipe."

"Not I. There's another old trick I cling to still, though I suppose Father Time will stiffen up my joints, pretty soon, so I must give it up. I take my morning swim just as regular on the lake over there, as I used to from the salt tide."

"You must find it irksome on chilly mornings," was the careless rejoinder.

"Not I. It renews my youth, freshens me, mind and body. It is one of my pet theories. Come, try it with me in the morning. I've a jaunty little boat I row out into the lake, just after the sun peeps up. It's better than wine to quicken the blood, when you come up tingling with your dive down into the cool freshness below, and inhale the reviving air."

The Honorable Richard shrugged his shoulders.

"Bah! it gives me a shiver to think of it. It is extremely imprudent. A man of your age diving like a boy! What if anything happened?"

"Pooh! I'm as good as half a dozen young men of the day. When I begin to feel old, I shall take Tim along with me, to pull me out of trouble. I'm good for some time yet. I had the cramp one morning, but I got back safe. Hillo, Tim! where are you? Go and bring me some of those choice cigars I keep out of the way of the rabble. You won't find their equal now, Dick. I bought them myself of an old Manilla merchant, on my last East Indian cruise. I am on the last thousand now, and they grow more and more choice."

Tim, a stout, stalwart fellow, bearing unmistakable evidences of his sea proclivities in his gait and sailor dress, darted out from his post in the corridor. A noble fellow was Tim, deserving something beyond casual notice, with a heart as brave and a soul as true as steel. He had entered the service of his beloved master when he was only simple Lieutenant Thurston, and he had never left him since by night or day, and never was simple nature more thoroughly spaniel-like in its devotedness than Tim's affection for Captain Alick. In the honest servant's eyes, that gentleman was not alone the best and kindest, but he was also the greatest man in the world.

Captain Alick was not a man to undervalue such faithful attachment. Tim was his right hand man, often his chosen confidant.

The two gentlemen paced to and fro with their cigars all the evening long. Genieve, sitting at the dim library window, with her fair cheek pressed against the glass, could see the two forms passing backward and forward, the tall and slim, and the broad stout figure, and now and then came floating to her ear the mingling voices. Presently the glimmering spark which had accompanied them vanished. The cigars were finished.

They were coming in. The girl rose from her half-reclining position, shook out the folds of her white dress, and went to meet them, thinking perhaps they would like music. She came upon them just as they were halting beneath the effulgence of the hall lamp.

"I think I will go to my chamber, Alick.

The long ride is something out of my way, you know, and I feel unusually tired. I have that business to look over, besides. So, if you will excuse me, I'll wish you good-night."

"Certainly, certainly. Make yourself comfortable, by all means. There will be a man to attend to your wants. What a puny frame you've got, for all those long limbs, Dick! It would take many a ride to use me up in that way. You'd better get up in season to join me at my bath."

"Thank you, I have wit enough left to keep out of that. Good evening, Miss Genevieve."

Captain Alick had not observed her before. He turned, and drawing her forward under the light, so that its rays fell glowingly upon the graceful head with its gold brown curls, its fair transparent complexion, and soft violet-blue eyes, he said, in a significant tone:

"Dick, old boy, here is a charming vision to take with you into your gloomy chamber, and into your crooked lawyer puzzling and planning. Let it have a Christianizing influence!"

Richard Merton had good cause to remember that picture for many and many a day, and it was stamped indelibly upon his memory, though he half closed his keen gray eyes, as if to shut out a sight which pricked him painfully. He saw them after he had gone up into his chamber, dismissed his valet, and settled himself down to look over the obnoxious papers.

Again and again, between him and the written pages floated that pretty picture. The stalwart old navy captain, with his grand, rugged, honorable face, one arm thrown around the sylph figure in the fleecy snowy robe, with its broad black sash, its sweet innocent face upturned so confidingly and tenderly.

Many and many a night afterward the Honorable Richard Merton woke panting and trembling from a dream in which the smiling faces had suddenly changed into a solitary figure—a cold, stark, dripping corpse, with frozen glaring eye, and stiff menacing finger.

His lip curled scornfully now, unaware of the terrible power the vision should gain in the brief space of four-and-twenty hours. Unrolling the papers, he went through them rapidly, with absorbed attention. When they were finished he flung

them down on the table, and took breath in a long-drawn inspiration.

"Just about what I thought they would be. It shows the wisdom of my management; it was the most judicious course that could have been taken. I was startled, I must admit, to find out this widow should prove to be the same girl. Why must the wench have so everlasting turned up in my way? She is dead at last. The grim archer be praised for that! Hum! the case will not prove a very troublesome one, except for the perversity of this romantic old sea-dog. It's a snug property to lose, and there's no question but he will change the will, if I don't play skillfully. I must blind him a little—hold out a hope of compromise in case I am convinced of the actual legality of the marriage. It will be easy enough to pick flaws in the testimony, which will require further corroboration. But the girl shall never have the noble property, and poor Phil be turned off with a mere pittance. Never, never!"

So ran the soliloquy of the honorable gentleman. The last words were unconsciously spoken aloud.

If Tim, who had come in rather abruptly, to bring a glass of egg-nogg, with his master's compliments, overheard them, there was no sign of his interpreting them on his stolid countenance, as Mr. Richard's searching glance assured him, and the latter retired to his bed, undisturbed by the circumstance.

Meanwhile, below, in the cosy library, sat Captain Alick in the great armchair, and on a footstool at his feet, with her fair head against his knee, was the fairy-like Genevieve. Captain Alick's hand lingered fondly amid the shining 'curls, and the voice, with which he now and then addressed her, was broken and tremulous.

They had been talking about her mother. The blue eyes of the girl were like dew-sprinkled violets, for the tears still clung to the long lashes.

"Ah, the parting with her was terrible!" sighed Genevieve's low sweet voice. "I thought I should not live to bear it, yet now I am strangely comforted. She was so sad all her life, my poor mammal! How often have I wondered that my father's death should have so completely broken her spirit. She only lived for my sake. O, her tender devotion to me was a wonderful thing! Yet I am content to forego it,

if she is happy at last. And, somehow, I cannot think of her as lying in that far-off Sicilian grave; perhaps it is because she sent me hither before the last hour, and so spared my beholding that cherished form laid in the cold ground. I cannot believe her dead; her living presence, her angelic love, seems to surround me everywhere. And in you, dear friend, I have found a second parent. I hope some day I shall be able to prove my gratitude. I have found you just what my mother promised me, a noble, generous, true-hearted father. O Captain Alick, you shall never repent your kindness!"

"No, my child, I never shall," answered Captain Alick, drawing his hand across his eyes, and speaking in an almost solemn tone.

There was a little pause, and then he spoke again, more cheerfully.

"And you are contented, Genevieve? you do not find this retired, lonesome place gloomy for such young fresh spirits?"

"Gloomy, no indeed! I am charmed with all things. I should be wicked enough, to be dull, after all your efforts to add to my enjoyment. I enjoy the pony so much! I had such a fine canter early this morning. And O, that reminds me of an adventure I met. I have seen Old Moll, as the housekeeper tells me she is called. You have such queer names in these parts. How like I was to laugh the first time you called Mrs. Bourne Widow Nancy, and now I do not mind it at all!"

While she was laughing in her pretty girlish way, Captain Alick looked down earnestly into her face.

"You have seen Moll, Genevieve? I am very glad of that."

"I wonder why, Captain Thurston?"

"Because she was one of your mother's few trusty friends. Genevieve, my darling, if unforeseen events should happen, confide implicitly in Old Moll; trust her fearlessly, obey her, if need be, go to her in any trouble for assistance. If you should need protection, which Heaven forbid, but if such a direful time should come, and anything have happened to me, go to Old Moll without a question of her faithfulness, or the real goodness under a strange whimsical manner."

The housekeeper spoke as if the strange woman was more feared than respected in the place. She says she has un-

canny ways; that she disappears strangely, and goes wandering, no one knows whither."

"There will always be such idle stories about so eccentric a person as Old Moll, but you can credit my assurance, you will always find her a true and faithful friend, if anything should happen to me."

"O Captain Thurston, why do you say that? what makes you look so grave and sad?" cried Genevieve, the tears rising again. "What indeed would become of me, if I lost you?"

"It is very silly in me. Hush, my darling, don't cry again. I'm ashamed of myself. It's one of my old sailor superstitions; a strange gloom has come upon me, a dreary foreboding of evil. I will shake it off." And the noble old veteran laughed, and patted her cheek, and kissed her, and called her many fond and silly names, and thought he had cheated her into believing him jolly and merry again. But the same uneasy flicker was in his eye; ever and anon the grave weary cloud hung over his forehead. When she rose to say good-night, he drew her gently towards him, put his hands upon her head, and gave her a solemn blessing.

When she had gone away, folding his hands behind him, Captain Alick walked to and fro for a long time, lost in a melancholy reverie. Presently he went to the iron safe in one corner, unlocked it, and took from it a small box of papers. He selected one, and went to the table, reading it carefully through. He folded it up with a heavy sigh, and leaned his head upon his crossed arms, in the very attitude of a grieved schoolboy.

"I shall not feel so forlorn, so terribly down-hearted in the morning," muttered he, lifting his head again. "I shall laugh then at this nightmare."

Presently, as if a new idea had come to him, he drew towards him the inkstand, and then taking a formal-looking document, wrote hastily across it, in his bold legible chirography, a few lines. This done, he seemed somewhat relieved; replaced the paper in the safe, locked it carefully, and ringing the bell, summoned Tim to escort him to his bedchamber.

He came forth from it early in the morning, with a brighter face, and passed lightly the chamber door of his guest. Only a few of the household were yet astir. His

passage down stairs and out into the yard excited from these no surprise or comment. It had been his invariable habit for ten years to take this morning bath, whether in the balmy air of summer, or beneath the chilly winds of winter, if the ice did not forbid the indulgence. Tim followed, to carry the towels and unmoor the boat.

Captain Alick pushed off vigorously, and Tim sat down on the bank to await his return. The honest servant watched the dancing boat with exulting pride at his master's continued strength and dexterity; but presently grew a little sleepy, and yawned, as he lazily switched off the bright heads of the flowers growing on the bank, and so his attention was momentarily diverted.

He sprang to his feet, however, as there came over the water a faint halloo, and looked eagerly towards the motionless boat. The powerful swimmer had made his plunge; why did he not gain the boat? for certainly, if Tim's eyes served him right, the skiff was empty.

Tim darted along the bank to another boat moored near by, and in a moment had started gallantly to the rescue. The white foam flew from the flashing oars, the boat spun over the waves as if propelled by arms of iron. Tim's eager eyes darted over the water in wild horrified affright, as he came to the idly drifting boat, in which lay his master's empty clothing. He shrieked that master's name in a hoarse screaming voice, and then plunged frantically into the water. Again and again poor Tim explored the remorseless depths. In vain; and at last, with a wail of anguish, the faithful fellow, exhausted by his desperate efforts, sank helplessly upon the bottom of the boat, and lay there in a kind of stupor.

As strength returned, he roused himself, and rowed slowly and disconsolately back, while the empty boat, which had so long been guided by the hand so helpless now, drifted behind him.

A ghastly face was it which poor Tim presented to the startled household, and terrible tidings were those he bore. A wild tumult of lamentation and weeping roused Richard Merton, sleeping calmly in the chamber above.

He was met on the threshold by Tim's wretched story. I dare not picture what thoughts leaped madly through the mind of this man, who had been so tenderly beloved;

by the dead master of Thurston Cottage. I shrink in loathing of such base ingratitude, such treacherous friendship. But his face was grave and solemn with decorous sadness. He asked pertinent questions concerning the hopelessness of further search, and commended the arrangement which had sent a band of the stoutest swimmers to explore the lake. He spoke soothing, comforting words to still the grief of the faithful servants, for Captain Alick was not a master to be carelessly deplored. He expressed in words which drew tears from all, his own bereavement, and then, and not till then, he asked the question which had been printing its fiery letters on his brain, through the whole.

"Had his beloved relative left the house that night? Had he sent for any solicitor, or drawn up any instrument himself, that it might be his melancholy pleasure to see faithfully carried out his dear friend's last wishes?"

"Ah sir," sobbed Tim, "it's little he thought of this. He told me I was to go over after breakfast for the lawyer, that he wanted to make a change in his will. I'm sure there is one now, but what there was he didn't like I'm sure it's out of my power to tell."

Richard Merton drew a long breath.

"Nothing must be touched until the lawyer comes. What a sorrowful ending is this to my visit!"

And with his cambric handkerchief over his face, the honorable gentleman withdrew again to his chamber.

In another room poor Genevieve was sobbing in the good housekeeper's arms. The sudden blow had completely prostrated her hitherto elastic spirits.

"O, what will become of me now, what will become of me now?" murmured she, despairingly.

"And not a sparrow falleth to the ground unmarked," said a deep voice at the door.

The sobbing woman turned with a start of alarm. There on the threshold stood the strange, weird figure of Old Moll.

"I hear that death is abroad, and I have come to listen to his preaching. A good man is gone—a mighty oak has fallen. Well may you weep, yet let your tears be free from bitterness. Is it true, Nancy Bourne, that the cold waves cover the form of Alick Thurston?" asked the woman, pushing away the struggling, snow-white

locks which streamed from her singular bonnet—a huge calash of green silk.

"It is true," answered the housekeeper, with a fresh gush of tears.

"The Lord have mercy upon us all!" ejaculated Moll, in a solemn voice. "Mysterious are his ways, and past finding out."

"It's little enough he thought of this, when he left us so bright and cheery this morning—my dear, noble Captain Alick," wailed the poor widow Nancy. "He was the best friend I had in the world!"

"I have lost everything with him!" added Genevieve, drooping her head again to Mrs. Bourne's shoulder.

The old woman looked at them gravely, and then dashed away a tear from her swarthy cheek, while she said in a peculiar, deep, hoarse voice:

"Be comforted, children. We must all die; for the just man, it is only gain, and such we can hope was Alick Thurston."

"Can *hope!*" exclaimed the worthy housekeeper, in indignation. "If there is any one to doubt that angel's goodness, it should not be you, Old Moll, you whom he has befriended against all the ill-will of the town."

"I know, I know, he was a true friend. I shall not soon see his like. But wherefore indulge in unavailing grief? I tell thee, old woman, Old Moll's is not a heart to harbor ingratitude."

A servant came to the door for the housekeeper, just then, and for a moment Old Moll was left alone with Genevieve. The girl was startled, as the swarthy wrinkled face was bent down hastily to hers and the deep voice whispered:

"Child of Miriam, doubt not the goodwill of Old Moll. Believe none of their shameful charges. He knew me better; knew my mission, my devotion to you and to him. He confided to me what was closely kept from all else. He promised me to make a new will, and secure you from poverty. Has he done it?"

"I do not know. I cannot tell, I am sure," faltered Miriam's daughter. "O, I cannot think of such things, now. I can only remember that I have lost his tender love, his fostering care—that I am all alone, utterly desolate."

"Hush, hush, my child, that is false. You have Old Moll, a faithful devoted friend, who will watch over you, who will work for you, who will love you always."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Genevieve,

conscious of a strange thrill stealing into her heart, at the earnest, impassioned tone.

"I am your mother's best friend, and yours, sweet child. Fear not! Have courage! However dark your future may seem, Old Moll shall sometime prove a fairy godmother, and bring you joy and peace."

There was no time for Genevieve to reply. The housekeeper, followed by one of the maids, entered the room, and Old Moll, holding up a warning finger to repress the girl's answer, fell back to her old position.

In a few hours the house was filled with a crowd of shocked and sympathizing, or curious acquaintances. The lawyer had also arrived, and was closely closeted with Richard Merton. The fact was dismally realized now by the whole household. The genial, generous, kind-hearted master of Thurston Cottage was gone!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CAPTAIN ALICK'S LEGACY.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

CHAPTER IV —[CONTINUED.]

Meanwhile, in the comfortable room allotted to her, Genevieve was sitting, like one whose faculties had been stunned by some powerful blow, with her bonnet still on her head, and her travelling-cloak hanging across her shoulders. This was an entirely new and unexpected experience. In the midst of her many sorrows and trials, she had never before failed of winning love and sympathy. Her interesting appearance, her unconscious grace, and loveliness, and amiable character, had always won her friends, even from strangers. The moment her mother's almost idolatrous affection was removed, Captain Alick's tender care had taken its place. She had grown so used to being petted and beloved that she had insensibly counted upon its continuance. This rude neglect and unkindness astonished almost as much as it pained her. Perhaps it was an experience needed to complete her character. Under the continual sunshine of affection, she might have grown weak, spiritless, vacillating. This new chilling blast, like the wintry wind to the tender oak sapling, brought strength and power of endurance, toughening, invigorating, perfecting.

"I will not be hasty in my judgment," said she, as at length she rose from her seat, and, with trembling hands, began to remove her bonnet and smooth out her disordered hair. "The circumstances of my arrival were somewhat trying. This Philip is evidently of great consequence in the family, and their alarm for him may excuse their indignation against the cause, however innocent. But if their unkindness is continued, this roof shall not cover me another week. I am young and healthy; surely I can earn what little I require for my simple wants. I am no dependent. They shall learn that right early. I came here because it was my right. It was but the difference of twenty-four hours, and Captain Alick's fortune would have been mine, instead of theirs. I accepted the

.proffered home in the same spirit with which I should have offered it, had our cases been reversed. I am no interloper; if I am not wanted here, I can go away. Old Moll is still a refuge when other homes fail."

She was interrupted by the entrance of a servant with her trunks, which had just arrived with the luggage from the station.

"Missis says the trunks are to be brought here. She wants to know if you wish to open more than one; if you don't, the other can stand in the storeroom."

"I should prefer them both here," answered Genevieve, steadying her voice. "Would you please bring me a glass of water? I am very thirsty."

"She's a sweet young creature, anyway, and a born lady, whatever made missis send her up here," murmured the kind-hearted chambermaid, taking occasion of the general confusion below stairs, to get a plate of sandwiches and cake, as well as the water.

"I brought you jist a bit of luncheon, miss; I know you must be hungry, a riding so long in the train. They're kind of put out down stairs, with Mr. Philip's accident, and aint so quick to think of a body's needs."

"I am very sorry that the young gentleman is hurt. He is not Mr. Merton's son, I think."

"O la, no, miss. Master was his guardian, you know, and he's to marry Miss Annabel, some day. He's a nice young man, is Mr. Philip. But the doctor says it's nothing serious, only he'll be laid up a while."

"You are very kind. I am really quite faint, and this luncheon is very acceptable. I am glad to have made one friend, at least, in the house. What is your name?"

"My name is Jane Gove, at your service, miss; and sure it's them as is hard-hearted enough wouldn't be kind to such a pretty little creature. La sake! them curls be just natural, aint they? Why, Miss Anna-

bel's have to be done by the hair-dresser, and then aint half so pretty."

Jane lingered, hoping to gain some knowledge of the position the new-comer was to occupy in the family; but while she was unaffected and pleasant, Genevieve preserved a quiet dignity which would not stoop to parade her claims or wrongs to Mrs. Merton's servant.

She spent the interval before the dinner was announced in shaking out her dresses and stowing them as compactly as consistent with their texture, in the rather limited space of the shallow closet. Her wardrobe was fortunately generously stocked; for Captain Alick, with a man's thoughtless prodigality, had sent an unlimited order to the nearest town dressmaker, which resulted in about treble the number of costumes she actually required. Her purse, too, was richly lined. She remembered now, with a little sob choking her throat, how playfully Captain Alick had counted out all the bright gold pieces and rolled up the bank notes, telling her his adopted daughter must have an allowance suitable to her position. It was a great relief to know she need not soon apply to Richard Merton's charity.

She was standing before the glass, tying the black shoulder-knots to her white cambric dress, when the dinner-bell rang. There was an added color to her cheek, and a nervous flutter beating at her throat, but other than this there was no sign of embarrassment, as the graceful white-robed figure glided into the handsome dining-room, and stood waiting, with lady-like ease, for the hostess to give her a seat.

Mrs. Merton bit her lip as she looked up. The wonderfully seraphic look of the beauteous young face, crowned with that aureole of gold-tinged curling hair, was more perceptible, now the black bonnet was removed. Even the cold-hearted scheming woman of fashion could not refuse to recognize the spell, though it hardened her ill-will. But the servant stood beside her chair, and she spoke politely, although with chilling tone.

"Miss Grey, please to take the chair beside Mr. Merton. My daughter is indisposed, after so much alarm, and will have her dinner sent up stairs."

"I am very sorry my first appearance should have been accompanied with such unpleasant circumstances. I hope the gen-

tleman's injuries will prove less serious than was apprehended," answered Genevieve, gently.

"Mr. Leigh is sleeping now, from the effect of the doctor's anodyne. He has suffered severely, and is likely to pay very dearly for his folly." He is a generous-hearted young man, and does not stop to consider the consequences, where his sympathies are roused. He would have done the same reckless thing for an old washerwoman," resumed the hostess, playing carelessly with her fork.

"I do not doubt it. He seemed to me like one of the old chivalrous knights we read about."

Mrs. Merton frowned. "That is rather an indecorous speech for a young woman; but I forget you would hardly be likely to get the proper education with Captain Alick. You will understand that I make the corrections of the faults I discover for your own good. Girls brought up solely in the society of men are always so disagreeable to society, so bold and forward."

"I trust you will never have occasion to accuse me of such odious manners," answered Genevieve, the color flushing more and more deeply on her cheek, and an indignant sparkle breaking over her violet eyes. "Captain Alick was one of the most refined, womanly gentlemen I ever met. Besides, I had only resided at Thurston Cottage a little less than two months, and hitherto I have been entirely in female society. My mother, madam, was one of those sensitive, shrinking natures not even the ill-disposed could call bold."

She paused, for there was a momentary faltering in her tone.

The Honorable Richard nervously pushed back his plate. "That lunch has spoiled all my appetite for dinner," said he, peevishly. "Thomas, bring Miss Grey some of the salad and a wing of the fowl. Do you take wine, Miss Grey?"

"No, thank you," answered Genevieve, grateful for even this poor civility under the eye of the proud cold hostess, and doing her best to dispose of the food on her plate, although it seemed as if every morsel would choke her.

When the frigid meal was over, Genevieve made another overture of friendliness. Instead of retreating to her chamber, as inclination prompted, she passed into the sitting-room behind Mrs. Merton. That

lady had already thrown herself languidly upon the lounge, and looked up, in apparent surprise, as the girl appeared at her side.

"I came to ask if there was any way in which I could be useful. I am quite a famous needlewoman in my way."

The wistful appealing glance had melted a less stony heart; but the Honorable Mrs. Annabel Merton, soft, and languid, and listless, as she seemed, had an iron energetic will of her own; and when she had mapped out a course for herself, never faltered. She had learned thus much from her husband's manner, that if the unwelcome guest chose to remain, remain she must. But she had not failed to detect the satisfaction in his look when she had suggested the possibility of the girl's voluntary withdrawal. From that instant her plan was settled. If any species of refined, incessant, polite torture could drive her away, she would not long disturb the equanimity of Merton House.

She half raised herself from the purple velvet cushions, languidly smoothed out the ruffle of fine old lace circling her delicate wrists, and, with a just perceptible lifting of her aristocratic eyebrows, answered, with a smothered yawn:

"Useful? I dare say the housekeeper will find enough to keep you busy; but I haven't talked with Mr. Merton yet, to decide just what position you are to assume. I can't attend to it to-day. I've had enough fatigue and worry. You are at liberty to amuse yourself to-day as you like."

Captain Alick had sometimes feared his darling lacked spirit, had not firmness enough to stand up boldly where it was her duty. He surely had never suspected such a gentle nature could strike so fierce a fire as kindled now in her eyes.

"Mrs. Merton," said Genevieve, her clear sweet tones a little strained, but in nowise faltering, "it were best we came to an understanding at once. I came here because my noble friend, my generous benefactor, in his last moments, wished it to be. Because he asked the man who received the fortune its owner meant should be mine, to care for me out of the abundance a mysterious stroke of providence gave to him, instead of to me. I accepted Mr. Merton's offer in the same spirit with which I should have offered the same bounty, had our places been reversed. I

am no intruder. I have no selfish, debased, sordid nature, to grovel here upon unwilling charity. I can go forth to-morrow, to-day, this very hour, if you like, but I cannot, I will not remain to feel that I am unwelcome!"

There was a cold glitter of malicious triumph in Mrs. Merton's eye as these impetuous words were poured forth; but she kept cautiously to the letter of her programme.

"Really, Miss Grey," said she, with a cold sneer, "I am hardly equal to such tragedy manners! I am quite unused to such cleverly got-up scenes. I beg you will carry your complaints to my husband, if you are dissatisfied with your reception. We ought to have thrown open the grand drawing-room, I suppose, for the reception of so important a personage!"

As she spoke, she rose to her feet with a sarcastic laugh, made a profound bow, and said, mockingly:

"Most high and illustrious guest, command the house, the servants, everything here, to your royal will, but pray allow me to enjoy my afternoon siesta in peace and quiet!"

With burning cheeks and hotly swelling heart, Genevieve walked out from the room, and went up alone to her dim narrow servant's room.

CHAPTER V.

THE wise doctor's prophecy was certainly fulfilled. Although it was not a dangerous case, it was a very trying and painful one. Philip Leigh had as much as he could attend to in bearing the pain from his strained arms and dislocated wrist, without inquiring into the fate of the heroine he had rescued. His ill-humor and pettishness were certainly excusable in consideration of his sufferings. His own valet had been summoned to nurse him, and he had the unlimited resources of the whole house at his command; yet he seemed extremely annoyed at being a guest there in his guardian's house. Annabel came every day, looking very lovely in her morning-wrapper, carefully selected in accordance with his rather fastidious taste, or splendid in a full evening toilet, and certainly did her best to entertain him for the half hour, morning and afternoon, she invariably spent in the sick room.

Mrs. Merton gave him a rather longer infliction, adroitly interfusing into her condolences well-drawn descriptions of dear Annabel's alarm and solicitude, which "her poor Phil" listened to with fingers aching to beat a contemptuous, impatient tattoo beneath the coverlet.

"I wish they would leave me alone—the pair of them," muttered he, discontentedly, when mother and daughter had got through with the regular morning call one day, just a week from the date of his accident. "I am so sick of the everlasting singsong talk! I wish I could hear something or somebody new. I say, Dickson, what's become of the young lady who was in the coach? Don't she care enough about a poor fellow's injuries to make the first inquiry?"

Dickson's face brightened. Had he discovered the key to his master's queer restlessness? his eager look when there was a knock at the door, and the invariably vexed, disappointed expression which was sure to follow?

"Do you mean Miss Genevieve, Mr. Philip? The sweet young lady has asked me for you every day. It was she who fixed that nice drink from the oranges. She made you some jelly, too. Dear me, sir, Jane Gove has been telling me about her; they're real cross to her. They've sent her up into the servants' suite. And the poor thing is just as unhappy as she can be."

"The wretches!" exclaimed Master Philip. "Have you found out just who she is, Dickson?"

"Why, yes. Jane has told me all about it," answered Dickson, delighted to have found something to interest the patient. "She's a nice girl herself, is Jane; and she's clear in love with the young lady. Why, sir, will you believe it? if Captain Alick hadn't been drowned that morning, she was to have had all the property! He was to have had the will changed that very day. It was something he said or wrote which made Mr. Richard bring her home. But my lady is clean set against her, Jane says. There was some sort of a scene the very first day, after dinner. Jane went into Miss Genevieve's room, and found her with her trunks all packed again, and her bonnet on, with her sweet eyes all red with crying.

"'Why, miss,' cries Jane, just longing

to catch the sweet young thing in her arms and comfort her, 'are you going out?'

"'Yes,' answered she. 'I must go somewhere, anywhere. I cannot stay here. O Captain Alick, Captain Alick!' cried out she, in such a pitiful tone, that Jane said it took the tears right out of her own eyes; and she went up to her, and said, fiercely—Jane is a mighty smart girl, Mr. Philip, if I do say it that's going to marry her sometime, with your leave, sir—"

"Marry her, Dickson? to be sure you shall! and I'll give the good creature a fine marriage portion. But go on—what did Genevieve say?"

"It was Jane who said it, sir. Says she, 'What be they doing to you, you innocent lamb? They ought to be ashamed, they had.'

"'Hush, Jane,' says that sweet angel; 'you must not talk against your mistress. I forgot myself. But I want to go away; can you tell me where it would be safe for such a forlorn young creature to go, until she can find a respectable home? I have money enough at present.'

"Jane jest tells her of her aunt, who keeps a snug little shop over at the West End, and promised to go and get a room there for her."

"And she has gone, I suppose," exclaimed Philip, in low wrathful tones. "Confound that doctor; let him say what he will, I will get away from this house today. I shall have forty fevers if I remain."

"No sir, she isn't gone. I was going to tell you. Jane got permit of Mrs. Merton to go out an hour or two, and she and Miss Genevieve hurried off toward her aunt's, but on the way they met a strange queer old lady, and the minute she saw her, the young lady gave a little joyful cry, and caught her by the hand.

"They talked so low and fast, Jane, who was half afraid of the woman, didn't make out much, only that Miss Genevieve agreed to follow her advice, and stay here till the queer body got a good place for her. It seemed very hard for her to promise it at first, but she kept saying, 'Captain Alick charged me to follow your advice, and I will do it, Moll, though it is very hard.' So they came back, sir, and here she is now, just as meek and patient as an angel, though it's plain to see how aggravating the ladies are."

"Where's Mr. Merton?" demanded Phil-

ip, indignantly. "What shameful conduct! How dishonorable! and she the real intended heiress of that dear old Captain Alick. I say, Dickson, bring me my dressing-gown. Not that seraglio-looking affair, the work of Miss Annabel's fair hands, but the dark purple one, with the gold cord. I'm going to sit up again."

"But the doctor said—"

"Hang the doctor! I know what I want. The worst arm can be slung up! And you wheel that great easy-chair into the little dressing-room, Dickson, and put away all signs of a chamber or sick room. Make it look like a little parlor. I'm going to sit there presently; have some books and that basket of fruit on the table. And O Dickson, are my velvet slippers here? I don't want to look like a ghastly old man."

Dickson, though a little alarmed lest the patient should be too rash, was secretly pleased at this new interest. He flew around as only a dexterous valet could, and he had everything in as trim order as could be desired.

"And now, sir?" asked he, with a little twinkle in his honest eyes, when he had settled the invalid comfortably in the ante-room, and for the third time brushed his glossy brown hair from the broad forehead.

"Don't you suppose you can get your Jane to make over the bed in yonder? and would she be so good as to ask Miss Genevieve to make a short call on a poor disconsolate invalid? Mind you manage the matter delicately, you sly Dick. She wont come unless she thinks I need her. Say I am down-hearted, low-spirited, and all that sort of thing, to move her gentle compassion. And, Dickson, you and Jane can be chatting in sight of our ante-room door, all the while. I wont leave the first chance for Madam Merton to bring any evil insinuations. I want to hear an original remark, and see a pure-hearted, innocent woman once more, and to cheer up the poor thing a little."

Dickson hardly waited to hear him out. In less than twenty minutes he returned in triumph, accompanied by Jane and Genevieve. The latter advanced eagerly to the armchair.

"I am so glad to be able to do something for you at last! What a weary, trying time you have had!"

"Not at all. I've been lonely, that's the worst."

"Why, Mrs. Merton said you could not endure company."

"Perhaps it depends upon the kind?" was the arch reply. "I am certainly inexpressibly grateful for your presence to-day."

"And you wish me to read to you. I am so glad to be able to do it, and so grieved that it is all the return I can make for causing you so much pain. When I have heard them tell how much you suffered, I have almost wished you had allowed the horses to take their own will."

"And perhaps have borne you to a horrible death," said he, reproachfully.

"It would have been over now," said she, in a low sad voice, with a long-drawn sigh.

"Now you are wicked!" exclaimed he, almost angrily. "You are saying it would be just as well to die."

She lifted her white drooping eyelids, and looked at him gravely, with those clear shining eyes.

"I do not think it wicked. I am willing to live, since it is the will of Heaven, but for me death has no terrors. The grave opens into bliss beyond measure. O, for me there is so much waiting there, and here it is so cold, and barren, and dreary!"

She had clasped her hands, lightly crossing her swelling breast, the violet eyes were uplifted in a sort of ecstatic joy, at the picture her thoughts had invoked of the shining-winged angels waiting above; the sweet lips quivered with a childish, wistful, homesick grief.

A singular mood came over Philip Leigh, half-wondering awe, half a sort of resentful indignation, as if her ardent desires thus touchingly expressed, were in some way defrauding him of some rightful due.

"I think it is wicked, and I am sure it is very unnatural," persisted he, stoutly. "You so young and gifted, in every way so capable of blessing a wide circle, to be longing to die."

She smiled, slowly.

"You have expressed it more strongly than I. But I do not wonder you cannot understand such a feeling, you who have everything to live for; friends and fortune alike smile upon you."

"Hold there! I affirm that I have not a single disinterested friend. I cannot remember my mother, my father died when I was a mere child; brother nor sister I never had. These people here have given

me all that I have had in place of those precious ties. Now what will you say?"

"That I can sympathize deeply with the loneliness of such a fate. I am very glad, though, that these people, as you call them, are so fond of you."

"Of my social position, my fortune, my old estate, if you please, Miss Genevieve, not of the man himself, whatever he may be."

She shook her head.

"I would rather not believe that, if you please. But I was to read to you. What had you selected?"

"There is a pile of volumes on the table; choose anything you like. Dickson, bring Miss Grey a footstool. Jane, my good girl, give that room plenty of attention, for I am sure it needs it badly enough. I shall be so rested by the change. Would you be so kind, Miss Genevieve, as to move this scarf a little."

The skillful compassionate little fingers made the change speedily.

"It's astonishing what a natural gift some women have at their fingers' end," said he, with a sigh of relief. "Dickson does admirably for masculine management, but sometimes it is torture to submit to his bandaging."

"If I could do any better—if I might be of service—" began she, timidly.

"Admirable! Would you indeed be so kind? How much pain it would save me," exclaimed he. "I could send Dickson to let you know when I was to be re-bandaged. I really believe I should get out a week sooner. You cannot imagine what a relief it will be. But pray say nothing about it down stairs, or I shall be besieged by offers of help from Annabel and her mother. Imagine what torture I should undergo, in such unskillful hands, and I should never dare to refuse. Now, then, for the book."

She had brought two, and as she seated herself before him, the girl looked up into his face with a shy deprecating smile, as she opened a small Bible.

"If you have no objection, I thought I would read first the Psalm which has always comforted me so much when I have been dwelling upon my friendless condition."

He bowed gravely, with a new deferential respect in his look.

Without the slightest shade of embarrassment, she read it through, in a slow, hush-

ed, but touchingly tender voice. As she closed the book, she saw the tears dripping through his long dark eyelashes.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Genevieve. You will think me a Hottentot and a heathen, no doubt, but this is the first time in my life I have ever heard a woman read the Bible. It has touched me deeply."

The violet eyes were looking up to him in innocent wonder.

"Is it possible?" said she. "My mother scarcely read in any other book. Captain Alick and I enjoyed our morning and evening chapter very much. He would always make me read to him."

"I do not wonder. You have a rare sweet voice, and I am certain sing charmingly. I must hear you sometime, but not to-day. Will you read some more?"

"Of this book of essays, or this volume of poetry?"

"The poetry, the Bible poetry!"

It was Philip Leigh's turn to speak in a humble, deprecating voice.

She read softly Psalm after Psalm, and then quietly turned to St. John, and finished with one of his heart-melting chapters.

A long, long sigh came from the listener. The proud young head had drooped lower and lower to the least painful hand.

"O Miss Genevieve, how much have I lost in having neither mother nor sister. Do not quite despise me. I have never sorted with the frivolous heartless world of fashion without scorning its hollowness and my own worthlessness. I have been conscious of a higher need, a more ennobling destiny, but never so powerfully as now."

"Despise you!" repeated Genevieve, a soft glow breaking over her face. "Ah, my memory need not turn back many days to see a generous noble spirit springing forward fearlessly, braving a terrible death to save a poor, unknown girl from danger. Do you think I shall soon forget it; that I shall cease to pray for Heaven's blessing upon my preserver?"

"You are an angel!" exclaimed Philip, and then conscious of a smile which honest Dickson could not suppress, as this exclamation, in a louder voice than they had previously used, came too his ear, he said, abruptly:

"But I will not be ungenerous, and trespass too long upon your kindness. Only promise me that you will come again, and

you may go, rewarded a little, I trust, by my assurance of the good your coming has brought."

Dickson marvelled greatly at the quietly subdued manner of his master, as he returned to his couch in the other room, and was as delighted as surprised when he found that the old irritable, fretful disposition had entirely vanished.

"Dickson," said he, gravely, that night, "you see that a single visit from that pure Christian maiden has done better for me than all the doctor's liniments and cordials. Can't we manage it, between you and I, and your shrewd little Jane, that I have a repetition daily?"

"We will try, sir," answered Dickson, bravely.

And so the conspiracy was hatched which so simply and yet so skilfully counteracted all the Honorable Mrs. Merton's machinations, and while she remained in profound ignorance, congratulating herself that Philip's illness kept him in from the parlors, where she could not always make sure of Genevieve's absence, and the little anteroom saw many a pretty scene, where the skillful fingers of the gentle girl bound up the bruised arms, injured in her defence, and her soft-toned voice read melodious measures. Once when Mrs. Merton and her daughter had gone out together, shopping for the move out into the country, Philip heard her sing, and thereafter declared he had never before known the true thrill and pathos of music.

The doctor, and the Honorable Richard, and Mrs. Merton, and the fair Annabel, all united in their astonishment and commiseration at his lengthy and prolonged convalescence. There was one who had no difficulty in solving the enigma.

"Heigh, Janet, lass—but it's rare sport to see Master Phil scramble into his sling when he hears any of the family coming," says Dickson, merrily, to Jane Gove; "he's got good wit of his own, has my master. He knows a true-hearted, beautiful woman when he meets one, as well as his most judicious valet—eh, Jenny, my lass?"

"Do you think there's no harm to come of it?" asks Jane, anxiously. "Miss Genevieve is just as innocent as a little baby. She don't mistrust a thing of all our plotting to keep folks away when she's there: She'd have brought it out forty times, if my lady and Miss Annabel were not so high

with her. They don't talk to her at all. It's plain to see my lady means to drive her away, if it is possible. But the dear little thing is happier now. She feels as if she was of some use, but she don't mistrust she is winning Master Philip away from the proud-spirited Annabel. O Dickson, you be sure that he will use her well."

"Use her well! I tell you he worships the very ground she treads upon. He says she is more an angel in spirit than in looks, and when that's said, there's no getting beyond, I'm thinking."

"There will be terrible times! The master will be fierce enough, and Miss Annabel. They were brought up to look upon themselves as sweethearts."

"He never liked her. He'd have broken away if this one had never come. And it serves them right, don't it, for treating her so, when they knew very well Captain Alick meant her to share the fortune, if she didn't have the whole of it?"

"Has that queer old lady been to see her lately?" asked Dickson, after a moment's silence.

"Yes. I see her prowling around the streets at all sorts of hours. I believe there is never a stranger comes here, but she is somewhere on the sidewalk, when they are admitted. I talked with her myself, a little while ago, and she asked all sorts of questions about Mr. Philip, and gave the strangest laugh I ever heard, when I told her how fond he was of Miss Genevieve's coming to see him."

"There's some mystery or other about it, it's plain to see—but there's Mr. Philip's bell."

"Miss Grey, what had that disreputable looking old creature to say to you?" demanded Mrs. Merton, in her chilling, sarcastic voice, as Genevieve came hastily up the steps from the servant's entrance, having been summoned there to meet Old Moll.

Genevieve stood for a moment confused and embarrassed, then she hurriedly stammered:

"It's an old woman I knew at Thurston Cottage. She came to see me a moment."

"A very respectable caller to be around Merton House. I wonder if the policeman was not dogging her steps! This is really too trying! It comes of Richard's foolish acquiescence in an absurd request, not in the slightest degree binding; indeed, no one is sure it was not a forged contrivance.

I will have the creature arrested and sent to the station, if she shows herself here again. I give you fair warning, Miss Grey."

"She is a poor honest creature, whose greatest fault is a generous attachment to a poor orphan girl. She was a trusted friend of Captain Alick's. Surely, madam, you will not be so pitiless."

"If you hold her in such high esteem, you can go to her. She assuredly shall not come to you while the roof of Merton House protects you."

And the Honorable Mrs. Merton swept away, her rich silken mourning flounces trailing on the floor behind her.

Genevieve watched anxiously for any sign of her humble friend, to warn her of the threat; although she could not believe the lady capable of carrying it out. But, for a wonder, Moll was invisible for a whole week, during which time, Philip had suddenly announced his intention of returning to the life below stairs.

"I can't cheat the doctor much longer, Dickson," said he, ruefully; "and I feel so miserably weak and mean, shamming in this style, after every visit of that pure-hearted creature. I'll go down and face matters manfully."

So Annabel was once more delighted by his presence in the drawing-room, although she watched him with contracted eyebrows when he walked over to the window where Genevieve was sitting with her sewing, and held out his hand, with a new earnestness of look which she could not fairly comprehend. Annabel followed him, and whispered, not so scrupulously low, but it reached Genevieve's ear:

"Nonsense, Phil. You are not obliged to be polite to her; it's only the charity young woman of Captain Alick."

The young man's eye flashed, but he smothered the ireful words rising to his lips, not for his own sake, but to avoid drawing on the head of Genevieve another vial of wrath. He took a chair beside Genevieve. Miss Merton looked amazed, but she restrained her rising indignation, and condescended to coax.

"Come, Phil, come over to the music-room, and I'll sing for you; that used to exorcise the evil spirit. And I've lots of news to tell you. There's many a grand fete planned for the watering-places. The season will be quite as brilliant as that we have had in town. There's a new lion, be-

side. The young Lord Barclay, who has been educating so long in Germany. I shall put off the mourning a week or two after we get out into the country; then I shall be ready for all the gay doings. Papa has half promised me a new set of amethyst and diamonds—a superb thing, at the court jeweller's."

"Yes, let us have music," said Master Phil, wondering that he had ever thought her vapid chattering lively and entertaining.

And not without definite idea of better enjoyment to be extracted finally from the instrument, he followed her to the piano, and turned over the leaves listlessly, while she gave him the new opera she had been practising.

"And now, Miss Genevieve, it is your turn," said he, as Annabel rose at length. "Let us have something solemn, and grand."

He knew she would strike into the grand old hymn which came swelling harmoniously from the white keys as they rippled beneath the touch of those slender fingers.

"Sing," said he, not in a peremptory, but rather an entreating voice. And he went to the nearest window and stood with his back to the room and its occupants, never offering to turn the leaves. Perhaps it was because of the moisture which came rising to his eyes as the thrilling tones took up the solemn inspiring words.

Genevieve indeed needed no aid. She was not using the notes at all. A natural musician, the piano had been her playmate and companion from early childhood; and in the little Italian town where her girlhood had been passed, improvisation was no remarkable gift, and she had quietly taken it up, without any consciousness of its being anything out of the common course. When the hymn was finished, her thoughts wandered away back to the low-roofed cottage, vine-clad and olive-shaded, within sound of the murmuring voice of the Mediterranean, where she and her tender-voiced, but ever sad-eyed mother had passed such golden, tranquil days.

The dreamy fingers kept the memory and gave it voice. Soft, low, delicious chords rippled languidly, as fell the sunbeams on those marvellous summer days when, the very breathing was a luxury and delight. Lulling notes swelled higher and grander, mounting upward till the listener's soul seemed borne along with them on ecstatic

pinions. Then came a slow deep-falling bass, like the first slow drops of an impending tempest, and the clash and clang, the wild sweep and sharp lightning strokes followed. Out of the wild boding hush, broke a low wail of grief and despair. That terrible day of parting, when the heroic dying mother has torn asunder her very heart-strings, to send away her child to safety and protection—how thrillingly the music rehearsed it! Genevieve had forgotten all things around her. Her head drooped, the eyes shone with the fire of improvisation. Her cheek grew paler, her lips were parted pantingly. The hands suddenly fell off from the keys, leaving a high agonizing note to die out sharply.

"Mother, O mother!" murmured she, wistfully. Philip Leigh had turned around. It was impossible to resist the magnetism of that thrilling music. A few noiseless steps had given him a position which commanded the performer's face.

He read very nearly aright the swift mutations of emotion there. He recognized, with a thrill, the genius which shone brightly from the violet eye, irradiating the beautiful face with a glory which indeed seemed to him beyond mortal; and with a sensation which shook his soul to its very depths, a nameless terror and a rapturous joy strangely blending, he realized something more—that for him, Philip Leigh, the world held but this one woman who could sit upon the inner throne, and hold royal sway upon his destiny. An indescribable longing to comfort her, to soothe these troubled memories of past joys and present sorrows, to kindle upon the pale cheek the glow his passionate declaration of love might bring there, a feverish desire to fling himself at her feet, came over him.

The cold sneering voice of Mrs. Merton broke in upon this half-tranced mood.

"Really, Miss Grey, you are treating the company to a very well-acted theatrical performance. If you please, you are wanted down in the basement. According to my instructions, the policeman has arrested that vagabond old woman who is constantly prowling about the place. Simpson has missed several spoons and some table linen. I trust you will be able to prove your freedom from complicity with the creature. But she is asking frantically for you."

The Honorable Mrs. Richard had come

in noiselessly and given one swift glance around. She had twice her daughter's sagacity and penetration, for all her listless quiet appearance. A tiger-like gleam shot across her eyes, as they turned from Philip Leigh's pale impassioned face, to the drooping head of the girl at the piano. Her words, therefore, were made even more acrid than she had at first intended. She was thankful Philip was present to hear of the low, disreputable connections of this creature. She well knew his fastidious ideas concerning a lady's contact with anything coarse or vulgar. She would dispel the attraction which the girl's wonderful power as a musician had exercised.

"Stay," said she, "I will have the policeman bring her hither." And with a sweeping sound of trailing silk, Mrs. Richard went out to give the command.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CAPTAIN ALICK'S LEGACY.: CHAPTER VII. CHAPTER VIII.

CALDOR, M T

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CAPTAIN ALICK'S LEGACY.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHAPTER VII.—[CONTINUED.]

Old Moll bent forward in breathless attention. The brown figure in the window shrank further back, and the delicate hands clenched themselves together till the plain gold ring on the third finger made a sharp indentation in the tender flesh.

He who had been once John Maclean of Scotland, but was now the Reverend Mr. Pomfret of Chicago, answered, unhesitatingly:

"I did. I married an English couple—very interesting people they were."

"God bless you!" ejaculated Old Moll. "You're not a villain. You've only been the innocent dupe of a wily man. John Maclean, this is a blessed day for you."

The clergyman looked questioningly into the face of the lawyer, thinking the old woman demented.

"You will understand our drift presently. Now I want the names of this couple. Take time before you answer."

The man was silent some time, then spoke, confidently:

"I am positive concerning the groom, but am not so certain about the bride's name. He was Wilmot Leigh of Lincolnshire. Her name was Miriam—Miriam Black, or White, I am not positive which."

"There are other colors," said the lawyer, smiling. "Green, Grey, etc."

"Grey! that is it. Miriam Grey."

"You are positive? You have no further doubt?"

"None whatever. The circumstances were peculiar. The fee was generous enough to keep me two months longer in Sicily than I intended. I was a poor minister then, broken down with being turned away from my Scotch parish."

"Did you know that Wilmot Leigh died not quite two years after?"

"I have never heard a word from him since; my life has been entirely changed since then."

"Did you know that the widow's claim was disputed? that her marriage was denied? that her certificate was stolen? that another entered into possession of the rightful property of her child?"

"I never heard a word of it."

"Then you are likewise ignorant that search was made all over Scotland, and far and wide through Great Britain for a John Maclean to testify to the marriage ceremony he performed? That advertisements were sent about, and diligent inquiry set on foot?"

The astounded man held up his right hand solemnly.

"As Heaven is my witness, I am ignorant of it all."

"I believe him," ejaculated Old Moll, still clutching hold of Philip Leigh's arm to restrain the impetuous questions which rose to the young man's lips.

"Tell us how it happens all this inquiry could not reach you. But first let me say that Richard Merton was the principal administrator of the estate which did not go to Wilmot Leigh's true heirs!"

A low exclamation burst from the clergyman's lips.

"I see it all now. What a poor dupe I have been. Let me tell you everything. I understand now why I was urged to return at once to America. I came home from Sicily improved in health, but sorely dejected in mind. My mother had died during my absence, which severed the only tie which bound me to Scotland. I tried unsuccessfully to obtain a living of some sort in England, and was forced to write for periodicals to earn my bread. I had occasion to go to Mr. Merton for a recommendation to a desirable office, and he inquired my history. I am positive now that I went back to my sojourn in Sicily, and related the marriage incident. It must have been then nearly two years after. I remember distinctly his inquiries about the

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names of the parties. He informed me that it lay in his power to put me into just the position I required, provided I was willing to fulfil a few unimportant conditions. He said a certain whimsical lady of fortune had commissioned him to find a clergyman to send out as a sort of missionary to the great western country in America, she agreeing to pay a most liberal salary yearly, provided the clergyman would take her name, and lose his old identity and associations. In the woeful strait to which I was reduced, this offer seemed like a special providence. I had no ties whatever to make it difficult to comply with the conditions. John Maclean had been such a wretched being, had proved so miserable a failure, I was not sorry to have done with him, and began life again under the better auspices of James Pomfret. I went to America; I settled in Chicago. The stipulated sum has been regularly paid, but I have heard nothing else from Richard Merton until to-day. I have grown prosperous, and I trust useful. I have a happy family circle, and have become a genuine American citizen. But growing rather fatigued after an unusually arduous season of preaching, the whim seized me to come back to my old Scottish home, and see if I should recognize myself in the hapless associations connected with it. Passing through London, and learning by the directory his residence, I called to thank the man who I supposed had been the disinterested means of my prosperity."

"The hand of the Lord is in it all," cried Old Moll.

Philip Leigh was on his feet at last. He confronted the lawyer with a pale stern face.

"I seem to be in a maze," said he, "but if this story I have heard is true, what am I?"

No one answered.

"At least I can say this for myself," continued he, the proud young head haughtily erect, "I am no dastardly usurper of another's rights. No one here is so astounded at this startling revelation as I. It is true I have no question of it. It throws light upon many strange movements of my guardians. It explains my poor father's sudden death. No wonder the perfidy of such an act killed him! But there are true heirs somewhere. Does this movement come from them? Sir, show them to me. They

shall find an eager friend to assist them in proving their rights. Why, how hardly they must judge of me. Wilmot Leigh's own son kept out of his right by such a distant relation as I. Man of law that you are, I put the case in your hands at once. I leave the property to be given to these long defrauded heirs."

Having spoken thus, still pale and sorely agitated, Philip Leigh took his seat again by Genevieve's side.

She laid her hand timidly upon his.

"Philip, Philip Leigh," whispered she. He turned with a quivering lip.

"It is only for your sake I am sorry, Genevieve," said he, with a wistful smile. "It was pleasant to think I could give you all the beautiful surroundings you deserved."

"This noble restitution, this prompt obedience to the laws of honor are worth forty estates," answered she, in the same low voice. "We are alike in our fortunes now, Philip, dear Philip. I am so happy in accepting your offer made this afternoon. I can do it now fearlessly. We are both young and strong; Heaven will smile upon your noble conduct. We shall be prosperous and happy both."

He looked up into her face now, all pain and sadness falling off beneath the glow of joyful pride.

"Heaven bless you, Genevieve! I am ready for anything now."

Old Moll's sharp ears had caught every word, but the green calash hid the overflowing eyes, the triumphant smile, from observation.

"No doubt the true heirs will speedily be forthcoming," said the lawyer, turning to the policeman. "You are satisfied now, I judge, that the statement my client made was correct, that the motive for hanging about Richard Merton's door was for a more worthy purpose than stealing spoons or table linen?"

The man nodded, good-humoredly.

"We may need your evidence at some future trial. At present I think we had better relieve Mr. Leigh's parlor of so many intruders. You, reverend sir, will of course consent to accompany me where I can take down your evidence in a proper shape."

He exchanged a few low words with Moll, gathered up his papers, and accompanied by the policeman and the Reverend Mr. Pomfret of Chicago, took his departure.

"I hope, Madame Heckler, you have given orders for a generous entertainment," said Philip, in a gay voice, approaching the window where the brown figure was hidden.

She did not answer, and he laid his hand lightly upon the drooping curtains and drew them aside.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated he, in a tone of alarm; "the woman is dead, or has she only fainted?"

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD MERTON came forth from the library something like half an hour after his reverend acquaintance had left it, looking haggard and exhausted.

He inquired of the servant if dinner was ready to be served, and looked gratified when told that it only waited for his appearance. Yet when he had seated himself, and the well-filled plate was set before him, he pushed it away with a sickly smile, and asked for coffee only.

He was too wretchedly abstracted to notice how pale and angry was his wife's face, or even to remark the absence of Annabel.

It was only upon the short irritated cough, the well-known prelude to the angry torrent of words with which this daughter of a baronet had sometimes regaled him, that he started nervously, and returned to the consciousness of her presence. Rallying all his powers, he looked across the table, and said, in what was intended for an unconcerned tone, but which dismally failed of its purport:

"Why, my dear, are we all alone? Where are the young people? I thought Philip was down out of his chamber at last."

"My daughter is in her chamber. She has a severe headache. Mr. Philip Leigh has returned to his own home, I believe. Have you finished your dinner? I am sure I have no appetite myself. I would like to see you in the library," answered Mrs. Merton, with freezing stately courtesy, which paid due regard to the presence of the servant.

"I will go now. I don't think I am very well to-day. I must get away from business for a little while," answered the master of the house, in a lugubrious tone; and with a rueful face he followed the lady as she swept before him.

She waited till he was in the room, closed the door behind him, and turned the key

with a vindictive snap. Then sweeping about, she faced him with eyes flashing angrily, and cheeks purple with rage.

"Richard Merton," cried she, in a voice trembling with passion, "this is your work; this comes from setting yourself against my authority. I wanted the girl sent away, and you would not let me!"

"What in the name of reason ails you? Annabel, I told you I could not send her off, but I submitted to your plan; I allowed you to make her life as intolerable here as you could. What has she done now? O, I remember. About that old woman. Set your mind at rest. I am going over to the police station; I will take care the creature is convicted upon a charge that will put her safely out of the way. Of course she stole. I have no doubt of it."

"I don't care anything about the woman," cried Mrs. Merton. "The old wretch helped matters along for that blue-eyed doll, instead of hurting them, as I expected. I don't care anything about her now, only I think it would be a satisfaction to see them all hung together!"

"What troubles you, then? The girl shall go if you insist. I will get her boarded somewhere in the country."

"Why didn't you say that before?" vociferated the lady, fairly doubling up her delicate hand and shaking it in his face. "It might have done some good then, but it is too late now."

"Too late!" repeated the Honorable Richard, retreating before the menacing gesture, and asking mentally what could have happened to put his wife into such an extravagant rage.

"Too late!" mimicked Mrs. Merton, following up her advantage, and finally holding him at bay in the corner of the room. "O Richard Merton! I could find it in my heart to box your ears, just as if you were a blubbering schoolboy. Your stupidity has spoiled everything, ruined my poor dear Annabel!" And Mrs. Merton sank down into the chair behind her, and indulged in that rare luxury for her, a genuine unfeigned fit of hysterics.

It was a long time before the Honorable Richard learned just what had happened. Not until he had seen his wife in an exhausted sleep, with her faithful Susan watching over her, and gone to his daughter.

The fair Annabel gave him a more coherent account. He was somewhat relieved

to find the extent of the grief her mother had set forth in such piteous terms, had been the shedding of a few natural tears of pride and mortification. She had already discovered a gleam of hope. On the table with the refreshment-tray, which had been somewhat rudely rifled for a young lady heart-broken, and life-blighted, lay a small newspaper engraving of the latest lion, the handsome Lord Barclay, in the act of mounting a spirited hunter.

The undaunted young lady had been building air castles of wonderful success, founded upon the solid basis of the set of diamond and amethyst, "which papa could not certainly have the heart to refuse now."

Richard Merton's sallow cheek flushed hot with anger as he listened to the by no means softened recital.

"I do not wonder at your mother's excitement," said he, sternly. "The insulting young ingrate! After all I have done for him, to defy me in my own house. We shall see how his proud head will bow. He shall yet sue humbly for the privilege of marrying you."

And he went back to his library, unlocked one of his private letter boxes, and began a strict search over a pile of papers, yellow and dusty with the years in which they had reposed in unmolested quiet.

He found what he had been searching after, carefully sealed in a blank envelop, and laid it securely in the secret compartment of his pocket-book. When this was done, he sat there a long time, lost in deep, and by no means agreeable reverie. The flush of anger died out from his thin sallow cheek. His head drooped lower and lower, until it rested upon the arms crossed over the table. A hollow groan came drearily upon the stillness of the room, as his laboring chest shook convulsively.

"O Alick, Alick! if I had followed your solemn charge, I might yet have hope of gaining back my peace of mind. I thought all things were laid in such a prosperous train, that I stood upon the goal of my desires, and lo, the fruit turns to dead ashes on my lips! The very foundation of security and safety seems knocked away from under my feet. Turn which way I will, only bitterest humiliation awaits me. Heaven have mercy upon me! After all these years of forgetfulness, my sin has found me out!"

There was a woeful wretchedness in the

tone, a terrible agony of remorse looked out from the glittering eyes.

"Richard Merton!" said a deep-toned voice, "have you grown wretched enough for atonement? Do you bring forth fruit meet for repentance?"

The startled man sprang up, and looked around him wildly. The door of the paper and rubbish closet was slowly opened, and the ubiquitous Moll walked forth gravely.

"Who are you?" demanded Richard Merton, shrinking back from the outstretched, warning finger. "How came you here?"

"I entered but a moment since. I knew you would be here overwhelmed with the failure of your cherished plans. I meant to share the wretched hour with you."

"Who are you?" demanded Richard Merton, in a tone less fierce and high.

"I am one who knows every secret you have sought to bury in your guilty heart, Richard Merton. I know of the foul wrongs perpetrated, of the evil plans frustrated. Once again I ask, do you repent? Would you once more have peace of mind?"

"It is impossible—there is no hope!" cried out the tortured man.

"With man it is impossible. With God all things are possible," answered the strange woman, who had always a text for every occasion.

"If I could hope so," muttered Richard Merton, wistfully.

"Carry your agonizing repentance to the feet of a Merciful One, more ready to give than you to ask," exhorted Old Moll.

The master of the stately house clasped his hands over his face, and the hot tears streamed through them.

"It is well," crooned Old Moll, rocking herself to and fro. "Tears are never at the command of the utterly depraved. They show when the heart grows like that of a little child. Weep on, Richard Merton; weep away all the hardness, and obstinacy, and evil pride. Throw yourself, like a sinner, at the Lord's feet, prostrate in the dust, and rise up like him, pardoned, ready to go forth to prove by works the sincerity of your repentance."

Another long silence. The hands were slowly withdrawn, the white haggard face looked forth with a gray gleam of hope upon its ghastly features.

"I think I understand you. Whoever you are, I thank you. You have put into

my groping hand a thread, which, frail as it is, may raise me up above the vortex of ruin which threatens to engulf me. I do repent. In dust and ashes I acknowledge that I have lived all my life by a false and treacherous principle—that no man can do evil and find peace, even though prosperity surround him. I will make a full confession, not to punish Philip Leigh, but to restore to the defrauded their just inheritance. You have some mysterious interest in the girl; take this, it is all that is needed, but I can bring further proof, a living witness. Take it quickly, ere the evil demons come back to rule my heart. Take it, use it, and leave me to implore mercy of that Heaven whose rule I have long defied."

He snatched out from the pocket-book the envelop so lately placed there, thrust it into the old woman's hand, and dropped his head again to the table.

Moll's hands were clasped over it a moment in joyful thanksgiving. Then, suddenly, she bent over the humiliated man, resting her two hands upon his shoulder, with her hot tears dropping upon the bowed head.

"Richard Merton, may the merciful Lord forgive, and bless, and love you as I do!" said she, solemnly, but the voice was not the voice of Old Moll.

He sprang up, and looked around him wildly, stretching out his arms imploringly.

"Who spoke? where are you? O, in the name of mercy, speak again?"

But Old Moll had vanished, and when he rushed through the hall to the outer portal, he saw her just closing a coach door behind her, as it whirled away. He went back to the library, with the look of a man walking in his sleep.

Philip Leigh lifted up the stiff insensible figure of Madame Heckler, and carried it to the divan, bidding Old Moll call a servant to his aid. The mysterious woman had complied, and taking advantage of the confusion at the Lodge, had quietly made her way back, as we have seen, to Merton House.

Genevieve, with her ready sympathy and womanly dexterity, came to the aid of Philip, and untied the strings of the muslin cap to give the cold throat relief. Heavy masses of rich brown hair, threaded occasionally with gleams of silver, fell out as she removed the cap, and made a wonder-

ful change in the character of the face. The girl, with a low cry, sprang away, and searched over the pale cold features with fierce questioning eyes.

"What could have affected her so strangely?" murmured Philip, as he chafed the delicate hands, and sprinkled the water over the insensible face. "Genevieve, could you loosen that close shawl? It would nearly strangle her, I think, if breath should come at all."

Genevieve's shaking hands unlocked the plain black brooch which secured the cape, and unbuttoned the waist of her dress across the neck.

Another low sobbing cry broke from her, as her trembling fingers tangled themselves in a black cord around her neck, which drew forth a small ivory case. She seized the case, opened it, gave one glance at the girlish face painted within, and fell on her knees before the sufferer, crying, faintly:

"O, save her, Philip, save her! She must not die! It is my mother, my blessed mother!"

Philip Leigh could not stop for further questioning, but worked with a will, chafing vigorously at the cold hands; and forcing drop by drop through the parted lips the wine Dickson had brought him.

Their efforts were rewarded at last. Slowly came the fluttering breath back to the gasping lungs. The deathly pallor of the complexion warmed beneath the inflowing tide of life. After a feeble trembling the eyelids fluttered away, and those sad blue eyes looked up—into other tender orbs of just such violet hue.

"Mother, mother!" sobbed Genevieve, flinging her arms around the helpless figure.

The feeble hands were clasped around her neck with a passionate abandonment of tenderness, which showed how terrible a void had racked the mother's heart, and over the colorless lips rippled the old words of endearment, the fond childish phrases, mixed up with many a sweet Italian word of caressing love.

"My child, my darling—my own precious one! Genevieve, *carissima!* Do I hold you in my arms again? O, how these eyes have ached, ached all the day and wept all the night, for one sight of this precious face."

"Why did you send me away from you? O, why did you practise so cruel a deceit?" asked the daughter, in tones of reproach.

"To give you your rights. I knew I should never be able to prove them myself. And I could trust so fearlessly the noble man to whom I sent you. O my darling, if I had known he was to die, I should never have tried it. And yet how blessedly has the truth come forth."

She had been growing stronger, and raised herself now, and drew her daughter's head fondly to her breast, while her fingers wandered lovingly amid the gold-brown rippling curls.

"My rights, mamma? I do not understand—it is all a mystery."

"You shall hear it fully explained. Only say you forgive me for allowing you to believe me dead; but O, was I not the keenest sufferer? Sometimes I have thought to grow mad with the hungry longing, gnawing ever at my breast. I have kept your history from you, because it was so woefully sad that I wished to spare your young heart so much grief. I really believed I was to die, and I embraced, with feverish longing to have you safer, the first opportunity to send you to Captain Alick. I gave him all your history and mine, and I knew that great generous soul would accomplish all that was possible. Do I understand that this noble-hearted, though strange appearing woman you call Moll, was left by him with the furtherance of his plan? Heaven bless her forever. O my child, we can face the world now. Your mother's name is free from cloud or stain."

"Mother, dear mother, what claim have I? You perplex me," said Genevieve, slowly.

"My child, did you not hear the man's testimony? It was true, every word of it. Wilmot Leigh was my husband, your father."

The girl sprang away from the clinging arm, and flew where Philip stood, grave, startled, almost dismayed by this renewed revelation.

"Philip, O Philip, I can give it back to you, I can give it back to you. Wish me joy, Philip!"

He took in his the eager hands.

"My Genevieve, pardon me that I am almost grieved. Shall I be so selfish, so cowardly as to allow you to marry a penniless man? You, who with your peerless beauty, your angelic goodness, and this noble fortune, may well count upon the coronet of a duchess."

"Philip, Philip! will you mar the blissfulness of this happy day? What for me were the proudest coronet in the land, if I lacked the more precious diadem of Philip Leigh's affection?" pleaded a sweet earnest voice.

While yet Philip, the proud foolish fellow, stood gravely thrusting down the longing to clasp her in his arms, and defy every nobleman in the land to wrest her from him, Old Moll returned from the hasty visit to Merton House. The few words she had overheard explained the case for her shrewd mind. She came up to them with a smile they did not see.

"You have discovered in my absence the true heir to the Leigh property, Mr. Philip. It is well for you that you have given good proof of your disinterested affection, else you had lacked Old Moll's approval. Now, no voice will give a heartier blessing to your union than mine. Especially," she added, "as I have taken pains to ascertain, as becomes a faithful guardian, that a snug little property is set down to you in a will which may shortly come into the executor's hand."

"It is a false report. There can be no one able or willing to will their property to me," vociferated Philip.

Moll smiled calmly.

"You are rash in your judgment. I am very positive there is an individual both able and willing, my gallant young lover. Take your sweet little bride, and be happy, Philip Leigh. You deserve each other, and this happy issue of so many startling developments. This girl's angel mother could not refuse her sanction to such a union. May her blessing descend upon you. Old Moll's mission is accomplished. She must go her own way now, and bid you farewell."

"Farewell!" cried Genevieve, seizing the old woman's hand. "Never, my noble, generous friend! You must remain with us; your home will be ours, your happiness our earnest study. You shall not leave us, Moll. Help me plead with her, Philip. Dear mother, it is Moll who has wrought all our joy; help me to convince her she is henceforward one of our family."

The old woman wheeled around suddenly, as Mrs. Wilmot Leigh came forward to her side, to add her voice to her daughter's entreaty.

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed Moll, in a shaky voice. "What do you mean, Genevieve Leigh?"

"That I have found my mother—my poor, poor mother—who nearly crushed her own heart and mine, to send me away to one whom she believed able to prove for me my rights. She concealed her continued existence to further the longed-for discovery. I found her here, Philip's housekeeper and my mother. It is all like a beautiful fairy tale—the lost one returned to life—the good made happy."

"Ah, there is one whose place none can fill!" sighed Mrs. Leigh; "our noble, noble friend Captain Alick. I understand that he left with you, my good woman, the fulfilment of his plans for our behalf. Wonderfully indeed have you succeeded. It is very little indeed that we can do for you in return. Surely you will not refuse us the satisfaction of caring for your declining years?"

Moll had been staring wildly from beneath the green calash.

"Ah!" cried Genevieve, "I remember. She used to know you. She told me she used to know and love you once. Do you not recognize my mother, Moll?"

"What! is there still further discovery to be made?" exclaimed Philip, gayly.

"Yes," answered Moll; but her voice sounded singularly unlike the deep tones to which they had grown accustomed.

She turned around slowly and deliberately, and walked toward the door.

"No! no!" cried all three.

"I will come again. I must go for Richard Merton. Put aside your anger against him; he is a miserable but penitent sinner. Without knowing of this discovery of ours, he has voluntarily given me the long-sought marriage certificate with which to establish the claims of this dear Genevieve. Wait here until I can bring him."

It was not so tedious a matter waiting, though Moll was absent two hours. There was so much to tell on either side—so many explanations. Mrs. Leigh was saying with a happy smile, just as the carriage rolled again to the door:

"Ah, Philip Leigh, you cannot guess with what bitter and unkind feelings I came hither as your housekeeper. I applied to you, from a vague hope of in some way eliciting information concerning the cruel arts which had been practised to defraud me and my daughter of our rights. I watched your movements closely until the accident occurred. Then my bitter-

ness melted. I learned from Dickson's occasional visits of your chivalrous conduct to my Genevieve. I began to doubt your complicity with your guardian. I grew to respect you. How thankful I am now to heal our difficulties by giving you this precious one, I cannot express to you, for words have little power where feelings are so deep."

Philip extended his hand to meet that of his late housekeeper with deep emotion. Genevieve left her tender clasp of the twain, to run to the window to watch the inmates of the coach.

"He has come! O Philip, Mr. Merton has come! But how melancholy and bowed down he looks. Dear Old Moll! her influence seems almost miraculous. How could she melt that proud heart? Mother, dear mother, do not tremble so. Why should you be afraid to meet him?"

"Alas, my child, the sight of that man will recall many sore experiences of my life; but that which thrills me now with keenest pain is the memory of Alick Thurston. He came between us so wickedly and cruelly—this Richard Merton. O, how will he dare to meet my eyes?"

"Or mine!" exclaimed Philip, fiercely. "Making me the innocent defrauder of the widow and orphan, to give a wealthy husband to his daughter."

He came in first—Richard Merton—and his stern lip quivered, as he said, promptly:

"I have just listened to a strange but blessed story—that one whom I believed sleeping in her grave had returned to life, to enable me to atone, so far as possible, for my wicked conduct. I come into the presence of you whom I have wronged so bitterly, humbly and penitently to confess my wrong-doing; not that I have heart to expect or implore your forgiveness, but that I believe it the first step toward retrieving my character here, and the way to prove my sincerity in the sight of Heaven."

The words fell falteringly from his lips. It was almost frightful to witness the great change which had come over him in these few brief hours. Not only in his deportment, the humble, pleading, deprecating tone which had been so hard, and stern, and self-sufficient of old, the downcast mournful eye and broken voice; but in the haggard worn face, the tall form bowed and bent as with the sudden weight of years.

The pair who had been so bitterly denouncing him a moment since, spoke simultaneously:

"We believe you truly penitent. We forgive you freely."

A mournful smile broke over his face.

"So generous? I did not expect it. I did not dare hope for it. I am sure I do not deserve it yet. But I will try. Heaven willing, I will try."

Genevieve hastened to give him an easy-chair, for she saw how his limbs trembled. He sank into it with a long-drawn sigh.

"You too?" he murmured, in a keenly regretful tone.

Moll from the doorway had observed everything.

"Thrice blessed is this joyful day. It almost seems like an earthly resurrection day. The blind see, the wicked repent, the dead are made alive again!" exclaimed she, coming forward slowly.

"And you were to reveal still another mystery," said Genevieve, eagerly.

Moll was deliberately untying the strings of the odious green calash, which no one yet had seen removed from her head.

Tantalizingly slow in her movements, she crossed the room, and rang the bell, ordering a basin and a ewer. The servant brought it, while utter silence and watchful eyes followed her movement.

The green calash fell upon the floor. Upon it dropped likewise the long snow-white elfish locks; the cloak, the blue dress followed. Moll stood before them, dressed in a fine broadcloth suit of navy blue with bright buttons. She bent over the basin, dashed the water over her swarthy face and hands, and turned herself around.

Genevieve was sobbing in the outstretched arms in another moment, and Richard Merton was kneeling at her feet.

"Captain Alick! O Captain Alick!"

Only swift-falling tears, choking sobs and close-hand pressure could give utterance to the emotion which filled every heart. Words were so utterly inadequate, so poor, so feeble, at such a moment!

Later on, Captain Alick had called around him a jubilant group. Not one of the dear ones who had clung so fondly to his memory was absent. There was honest Tim, with a story of his own to tell of the wonderful comfort Old Moll had given him at her lonely hut on the night of his

first visit, and of his many queer expeditions since. There was Dickson and Jane Gove, almost as glad in their young master and mistress's felicity, as in the promised comfort of their own lives. Even Richard Merton still lingered, finding it hard to tear himself away from the rejoicing happy circle, for a return to his gloomy home, where he had yet to confess such a humiliating story. But his repentance was earnest and sincere. He had a good motive now for retrieving his character. He had a far more cheerful heart, too, since the injuries he had inflicted were now so wonderfully healed.

It was not until the others had silently left them to each other's society, that Captain Alick, approaching Mrs. Leigh, said, earnestly:

"Miriam, the path of life leads down the vale, I know, yet there may be many a pleasant year left us—many a golden autumnal day. Why should we walk apart, whose hearts were blended in the early springtime? Miriam, beloved of my youth and manhood, will you come to brighten the home from which I must lose Genevieve?"

Her answer was low-breathed and brief. But when the young people came in softly, with shy inquiring glances, they saw that their dearest hopes were to be fulfilled. That those faithful hearts, separated by the cruel chances of so many years, were to repose quietly in each other's affection through the remaining days of life.

"I think there is only one who will be shocked and distressed by the marvellous revelations of this wonderful day," said Philip Leigh, that evening, as he was playfully clasping the jewels, from the well-stocked casket bequeathed from many generations of Leiggs, around the arms and neck, and showering with diamond sparks the gold-brown curlis of Genevieve.

"And who may that be?" asked Genevieve, with an arch smile. "The fair Anabel who so scornfully discarded you this morning?"

"Nay! She has already comforted herself with the prospective claims of Lady Barclay. But I refer to her singularly proud and ambitious mother—to Mrs. Merton."

"And why should she mourn, I pray you?" asked Mrs. Leigh, leaning across from her veteran lover's protecting arm, to

admire the pretty tableau of the graceful girl and handsome youth.

“Can you not see? She has lost forever, I fear, something more precious to her than any happiness of ours.”

“You speak in riddles; what has she lost?”

Philip bent to arrange a fillet of pearls across the fair forehead, and drew out from the crushing golden band a shiny ringlet, ere he answered, with a clear merry laugh:

“She has lost—Captain Alick’s Legacy!”

CAPTAIN ALICK'S LEGACY.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Honorable Richard Merton had left Merton House that morning with slightly disturbed spirits. His lady wife and himself had come as near to a matrimonial quarrel as it was possible for such high-bred people. It commenced in their dressing-room.

"My dear," the lady had said, with one of her blandest smiles, "don't you think it would be a good idea to send down workmen to Thurston Cottage?"

"For what, pray?" answered the Honorable Richard, testily, for somehow the very name of late brought a sting. Was it that he could not bear the thought of Alick Thurston's soleian charge, written on the last evening of his life?

"Why, for refitting it, to be sure," returned his wife, the thin lips settling down into a quiet determination, which he had learned to dread. "A great many people will leave town next week, but Philip's accident and sickness here will be a good excuse for our delay. I think they might get the place ready in three weeks, at the longest."

"Get it ready for what, Annabel? I don't understand you."

And the gentleman turned to the mirror, and began very earnestly brushing his well-arranged whiskers.

"I am sure I don't see anything very mystical about the words. You have had a fine country-seat left you. Don't you intend to take advantage of it?"

"I had a country seat before. What do you ask better than the Cote?"

"That tiresome place! We have been there every summer for a dozen years. It is not half so large, either, as the Thurston estate."

"I beg your pardon. The mansion house at the Cote is treble the size of Thurston Cottage."

"Of the cottage, possibly, but you know the grounds and outlands are really magnificent. The notice in the Gazette spoke especially of them. The workmen can soon put up a couple of wings. I sent Thomson for the plan of the place at the

architect's; it will be singularly easy to arrange additions."

"I dare say, but there will be no additions made this summer," was the dry rejoinder.

"I hope you are not in one of your economical fits just now, when I have set my heart, for dear Annabel's sake, upon making a little sensation in the world. As dear Lady Graeme was saying yesterday, I have contented myself with exemplary patience under a state of things entirely beneath my rank. This fortunate legacy will allow me to maintain the style suitable to the daughter of a baronet. I proposed inviting a select party to spend the summer with us. Just imagine how finely it will sound in the *Fashionable Gazette*:

"We learn that the Honorable Richard Merton has invited a fashionable and select circle to enjoy his hospitalities at the noble estate recently come into his possession. The house is situated near a romantic and charming sheet of water, and the fortunate guests will be sure of a halcyon summer. The Cote, the Honorable M. P.'s usual summer resort is closed, etc., etc."

"Lady Graeme says Brown will write the notice, and see that it is in. Just think of the advantage it will be to Annabel and Philip. For my part, I feel it will be the first step towards getting a letter of nobility for Philip. With his splendid fortune, he ought to be able to get one."

The lady had talked herself into good humor again. Glancing up into her husband's face, she saw there a look of horror which startled her.

"Why, Richard, what ails you?"

"Nothing particular," replied he, turning around hastily, so she could see his countenance. "I think I have only heard one word of your interesting Gazette paragraphs. That it is situated near a charming sheet of water. Do you happen to remember that Captain Alick was drowned in that lake? It will be suggestive of very enlivening reminiscences to your fashionable friends."

The tone was intensely bitter, only lightly covered by the sneer. What ghastly

dripping figure he strove to put away from his vision, she could not guess.

"Well, to be sure, I had forgotten that. But I don't believe any one else will remember it. But, Richard, I wish you would give the orders at once. I sent to Veasy to know if he was at leisure, and he can attend to the upholstering."

"If you have given orders, you can countermend them. Thurston Cottage will not be touched this summer. It is expressly provided in the will that the place will not be disturbed for six months."

"How tiresome! What could have induced him to hamper you with so unreasonable a charge?" returned the lady, peevishly.

"He did not know but he might die in the fall, and he wished to give his servants a comfortable home while they were looking out for another. He was a peculiar man; he had more regard for his servants than some people, even than the high and mighty relations of baronets."

The lady was too busy with her mental planning to heed the sarcasm.

"After all, we can go just the same. What there is of the house must be in good repair, and well furnished. I remember Captain Alick had the duke as a guest a little time ago. We must issue fewer invitations. It will be all the merrier for the young folks to be closely packed."

"You will go alone, Annabel, in that case. I shall spend my summer at the Cote, or else make a tour somewhere. I need rest; I am getting nervous with over-work."

"What perverse spirit has taken possession of you, Richard? Why can't you go to the Thurston Cottage?"

A slow shudder crept over him. His eyes were cowering beneath their lashes, his lips were blue, as he answered, in a tone which showed how the words were unwillingly forced from him:

"Because I could not endure the memory of the place; because I should go mad."

She looked startled, and answered, musingly, "I was not aware that you thought so much of that old man. You have not indeed been the same since his death. Then I suppose I must give it up. You must reward us for our acquiescence, then. My jewels must be reset, and have a few additions. And Annabel must have that diamond and amethyst set she so longs for."

"It is too costly and too magnificent for her. I wonder you do not see it. It is suitable for a duchess or a princess; any lower rank would be debased instead of exalted by attempting to wear it. I went over to look at it, after she coaxed me so long about it. I don't know where I could raise so many guineas as they ask for it."

"There is Captain Alick's prize money. It would buy half a dozen such."

The Honorable Richard threw down the hairbrush violently, and dashed out of the room. In a moment the street door closed behind him with a vindictive bang.

"Good Heaven! am I to be always tormented in this way?" muttered he, as he strode out of the room. "Is there never to be a moment's peace, without an allusion to that property, which already hangs like a millstone around my neck?"

He walked on at a swift pace, deeply lost in a gloomy reverie. Suddenly from behind him came a sweet clear voice: "Miriam! Miriam!" it called.

The dark-browed member of parliament started as if a cannon had been fired at his ear, and turned around, looking wildly in every direction. In a moment he uttered a contemptuous "Pshaw!" but his hand still shook, and his cheek was ghastly pale.

A bevy of merry, bright-cheeked school-girls were tripping along to their lessons, and they were calling to a pretty little damsel on the other sidewalk.

"This will never do!" said the Honorable Richard, resolutely, while he wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. "I shall be crazed in a month, if I go on at this rate. I must get away from all these disturbing forces. I must have rest and quiet until my mind returns to its usual tone. Then I shall be able to laugh at this nervousness. I will take a journey to Scotland."

Very much relieved by this decision, the gentleman passed the rest of the morning in less perturbed spirits. He lunched at the club-room, where he met a dozen of his own party, and enjoyed a spirited, informal debate on the questions of the day. The quiet deference to his opinion, the universal air of respect and esteem from these worthy gentlemen, restored still further his ease of mind.

By the time he was ready to go home to dinner, he was in a remarkably cheerful

state. He remembered his angry exit with compunction, and as a sort of peace-offering, dropped in at the jeweller's, selected a handsome brooch for his wife, and a very elegant, although less magnificent set of jewels, than those she had desired, for Annabel.

With these cases in his hand, and the most cheerful face he had worn for a long time, Richard Merton entered his home, and proceeded at once to the favorite parlor. He stood transfixed with amazement on the threshold. It was indeed a singular scene which met his eye.

In the centre of the room stood the weird strange figure of Old Moll, her arms folded across her chest, her green calash drawn still more closely over her face, her long white hair streaming wildly over her bright plaid cloak. On either side was stationed a stout policeman, and before her, her sweet face agitated with contending emotions of pity, indignation and distress, stood Genevieve; while still further from him were grouped together Mrs. Merton, vindictive and triumphant, Annabel, carelessly curious, and Philip Leigh doing his best to refrain from interference, until the proper moment.

The moment she caught sight of him, Genevieve sprang forward, and seized his hand.

"O sir, I am so thankful to see you! Please explain to Mrs. Merton her mistake. She accuses poor Old Moll of being a thief and a vagrant. Tell her you knew of her out at Thurston Cottage. How many can come from there to testify to her harmless character. Don't let them take her to their dreadful prison, I implore you!"

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Mr. Richard, his brow darkening once more.

"It means," replied his wife, in her haughtiest tone, "that I am resolved to rid Merton House of the prowling visits of this vagabond creature. The housekeeper has complained again and again of the mysterious disappearance of forks, spoons, table linen, and the like. I am convinced that we have discovered the thief. This vile old thing is hanging about the place morning, noon and night. Why is she here, unless to steal, like the rest of her class?" *

"She comes to see me. I have told you that before," exclaimed Genevieve.

"A fine pretence! I forbade you to receive her. I appeal to all here to know what they think of a member of this family, any member, however humble or obnoxious, choosing such an associate. I dare say she came to see you, and to steal likewise."

"Hush, Annabel!" said Mr. Merton; and while he tried to catch the expression of the swart face beneath the green calash without success, he turned to the policemen, and asked, "What do you think? Does the evidence against the woman warrant a search?"

"It's rather a suspicious case, sir. We have had our eye on her for some time. The lady is right. She is always hanging about this place, but we haven't been able to catch her yet at any tricks. What have you to say for yourself, woman? Why don't you speak?"

And the policeman laid hold of Old Moll's arm, and shook it by no means very gently.

"Evil to them as evil thinks," answered Old Moll's deep voice. "If you can prove anything against me, take me to prison. If you can find no further harm in an old woman than hanging about a place to catch now and then a glimpse of her mistress's sweet face, let her go in peace. Any way, the will of the Lord will be done."

But the downcast eye was bent anxiously to the floor, as if the poor creature was searching for some way of extrication from her dilemma. Old Moll had good reason for wishing to avoid the search. There was the purse well filled with golden coin in the faded old linsey dress pocket. It was honestly hers, but it would go far to prejudice the police, and even the court against her. She was keen-witted enough to see that.

"Why does she care so much about you?" asked Mr. Richard, coming to Genevieve's side.

"I don't know, precisely. She knew my mother, and she was very fond of Captain Alick. He told me, that very last night of his life, that I was to trust her; that she was one of my best friends, and knew a great deal about me, more than I suspected."

Innocent Genevieve! she could not have used more luckless words in pleading for her poor old friend. Richard Merton's lip

had suddenly whitened, the scared wild look came back to his eyes.

He turned to the policeman, devoutly hoping that proof enough to imprison the strange woman for life would be speedily produced.

"I agree with you. It is a very suspicious case. I think you had better take her away. I will come round to the station by-and-by to learn the result."

Genevieve uttered a sorrowful exclamation. Mrs. Merton smiled triumphantly. At that moment a servant came in with a card for his master.

"A gentleman who appears very anxious to see you, sir."

Richard Merton unconsciously read the name aloud as he took the card, "The Rev. Mr. Pomfret, from America."

At the same instant the door was pushed open. The eager visitor had followed behind the servant.

"I beg pardon, but it occurred to me that you might not recall that name," said the consequential, brisk little man, sprucely dressed in the finest broadcloth, as he hurried up to Mr. Merton.

"How do you do, sir? Ah, I thought you wouldn't know. Pomfret's the name I took, sir. I'm Maclean—the man you sent to that nice situation in America! I'm sure I'm grateful enough, sir. It's been the making of me."

"I'll see you in the library, sir. I'll come there directly," stammered Mr. Richard, the cold sweat starting out from his forehead.

"O, yes sir, yes sir; I knew you'd be glad to know how well I've got along. I'm just going to see how old Scotland looks. I haven't been home all these years," talked the voluble American minister, across the threshold.

The Honorable Richard fairly pushed him out, and, to stop his incessant chattering, followed him, and closed the door.

The ears beneath the green calash had not been inattentive. Old Moll suddenly wheeled around, and faced Mrs. Richard.

"The Lord maketh the ways of the wicked to turn to his praise, madam. Old Moll thanks you! You have done her the best service she could have asked of you. Policeman, ~~had~~ on; I'm ready."

As she passed the distressed and agitated Genevieve, she lifted up her wrinkled swarthy hands in blessing.

Up to this moment Philip Leigh had spoken no single word. He strode forward now.

"Miss Genevieve, have no fear for your poor old friend," said he. "As soon as Dickson can get a carriage for me, I am going to the Station House. If I have any influence anywhere in London, the persecuted creature shall be free before night."

"Philip Leigh!" exclaimed Mrs. Merton, her pale face flushing haughtily, "do you take sides with that creature?"

"To whom do you refer, madam?"

"To the vagabond woman I have just sent away from my house, and to her coadjutor, this pauper dependent upon my husband's bounty," answered the Honorable Mrs. Richard, quite losing her temper and waving her hand scornfully toward the frightened Genevieve.

Philip's hot young blood leaped madly to his cheek and struck angry sparks from his flashing eyes, his voice was hoarse, and his hand shook as he laid it upon that of Genevieve.

"If a man had made that speech, Miss Grey, you would have seen him prostrate at your feet by this time, for my arms, bruised as they are, would not have failed me. From a woman one must endure the most shameful taunts. Miss Grey, I hope you will pardon the abruptness of this speech. You will see that circumstances compel me to be less circumspect than I could wish. I love you. I think it was decidedly a case of love at first sight; but every day has deepened the impression. Will you let the carriage which takes me from here bear you to a suitable place of refuge? Will you—can you love me enough to marry me? Once my wife, we will see how long these shameful aspersions will have power to reach you."

Three more amazed faces than those of his listeners were never before seen at once.

Philip stood up with haughty head and shining eyes, and repeated, with that resolute voice growing softer:

"Do not make me miserable, Genevieve. You shall teach me something of your own sweet purity; you shall lead me in those nobler paths of life. Only say you will try to love me a little in return for my whole soul's devotion."

Genevieve stood looking at him with widened, violet eyes, dumb, not more from his declaration than from the sudden revela-

tion her joyfully leaping heart had simultaneously given. Twice she essayed to speak and the words fell back affrighted from the trembling lips.

"Philip, are you mad?" suddenly demanded Mrs. Merton, darting forward to his side at a pace singularly unlike her accustomed stately grace of movement.

In his old sportive, jesting moods Philip might have answered theatrically. But light, trivial thoughts could not come with his whole being roused to such earnestness.

"Would to Heaven, Mrs. Merton, that I had always been as rational as now," answered he, turning again to the silent girl. "Genevieve, dearest, am I to have an answer?"

"I thought—I understood," began Genevieve, glancing toward Annabel who stood supremely scornful, looking back to her.

"I guess your meaning," Philip hastened to interpose. "You understood that Annabel and I were betrothed. Let me tell you how true it is. My father died very suddenly, his health prostrated by excitement, and some perplexity of business which I never rightly understood; but I know my guardian, Mr. Merton here, helped him out of it. I was left as Mr. Merton's ward, accompanied by the wish of my father (out of gratitude, I suppose), that if we were both willing, I should sometime marry his daughter. Well, the time has come for us to be suitable judges of the matter. I do not fancy we are either of us very much in love with the other. I suspect rather my fair friend Annabel, when she succeeds in captivating the new lion of whom she was telling me, when she is Lady Barclay, will consider it a very good riddance for you to take me off her hands."

"I consider it so now," exclaimed Annabel, with asperity, her eyes snapping with a vindictive glimmer. "After the low tastes you have exhibited, I scorn you, Philip Leigh, too much even to acknowledge you as a friend."

She swept across the room in haughty disdain, and the door swung behind her stately figure.

Mrs. Richard, casting a glance of mingling rage and hatred behind her, slowly followed.

"And now, my Genevieve?" asked Philip, tenderly.

"O Philip Leigh, I dare not answer. Give me time—let me think."

"You are afraid you cannot love me well enough!" exclaimed poor Philip, in dismay.

Her sweet face flushed rosy in an instant.

"Not that, not that. I never suspected it till now. O Philip, I love you so well I am tempted to burden you with a wife upon whom rests so much ill-will and obloquy."

He covered the little hands with kisses.

"If you love me, that is all. O Genevieve, my treasure! how shall I deserve you? But you will go away. I will take you to the house where I have established a new housekeeper, which I only visit now and then. Hard as it will be, I will not come near it. There shall be no breath of scandal against my darling. But go away from here, I implore you."

"I will. It was only because poor Moll begged me to remain that I staid at all, after my first discovery of their ill-will; but you must say no more to me of marriage until I have talked with her. O, I have forgotten her troubles. Philip, dear Philip, you will save her."

"There is no need," said Moll's deep voice; and to their astonishment the door swung open and the old woman entered.

"You are free! they have released you!" exclaimed Genevieve, springing joyfully to her side.

"Old Moll is free. She has come to say you need no longer remain beneath the cold shadow of this inhospitable roof. She has provided a home for you. Come at once, for I am not ready to meet Richard Merton yet."

Philip's hand had gone diving hastily into his pocket, and his handsome face was almost ludicrous in its mixture of embarrassment and anxiety not to offend the old woman.

"My dear madam," began he, "my dear Mrs. Moll, will you take the young lady to a house of mine that I have fitted up lately, just on the outskirts of the city? There is a nice respectable woman in charge. Oblige me, too, by taking her there in a carriage. Here is the address and my purse. Use it freely, I beg of you."

A queer chuckling laugh came from the old woman.

"Does the fine gentleman think Old Moll is a simpleton, that she will take the pretty bird to his gilded cage just for the sake of a plump purse?"

The blood mounted impetuously to Philip Leigh's forehead.

"You wrong me, on my soul you wrong me. Do you think I could cherish such evil plans in such pure presence? Genevieve, tell her how I have besought you to marry me in Mrs. Merton's and her daughter's hearing, how I have laid joyfully my name, and heart, and fortune at your feet."

"It is true, Moll. You must believe him everything honorable and good," answered the girl, eagerly.

"You asked her to marry you, the poor, slighted dependent of this grand house, whose mistress was turning angrily upon her, whose only friend was borne away as a common thief!" asked Old Moll, in an exulting tone, thrusting away the falling white locks from her eyes as she peered into his face.

"I did. Proud and happy should I be if she would only consent."

"She, without dower, or name, or friends—do you mean it truly, young man?"

"As Heaven is my judge, I do," answered Philip Leigh.

Rubbing her wrinkled hands gleefully, Old Moll turned to Genevieve.

"And you, child, what did you answer him?"

"That were I only rich, and great, and worthy of him, I would joyfully give consent; but that as I was poor, obscure, reviled, I dared not drag him down from his rightful place in the world."

Moll held up her two trembling hands, and though they did not see it, the tears were slipping over the brown cheek.

"The Lord's name be praised! Blessed be the name of the Lord!" ejaculated she, fervently. "But come, we must go," added she, returning in a moment to her usual manner. "We shall be wanted. A carriage is waiting a little further off. Come with us, young man. We shall need you. Go quickly, my child, for your shawl and bonnet. Delay not for anything else."

Scarcely five minutes longer, and they were seated in the hackney-coach Old Moll had stationed in waiting. Dickson with wondering eyes had brought his master's cloak and wrapped around him, somewhat surprised to see the same policeman who had taken away the old woman, answering significantly her inquiring glance.

"Why do we wait?" asked Philip, in surprise, finding the coach still remained stationary.

"For another passenger," coolly replied

Old Moll, looking out anxiously into the street, and then exclaiming, in a voice of relief:

"And here he is."

To the astonishment of all but Moll the policeman came forward, accompanied by the gentleman whose intrusion upon the exciting family scene had so disconcerted the Honorable Richard Merton. He had just left the house after a long interview.

The poor man looked half frightened to death as the policeman quietly clapped him on the shoulder, and whispered a few words in his ear. He came forward, however, reluctantly, to the carriage door.

"Come in, come in, good sir," cried Moll, "there's no harm coming to you, none at all. A gentleman of your cloth should always be thankful to enact so important a part in so worthy a cause as lies in your power to-day. My friends, this is the Reverend John Maclean, a worthy Scotchman made over into an American citizen."

The reverend gentleman looked utterly bewildered.

"If you would just allow me to speak a word to my friend here, the Honorable Richard Merton," began he, in a beseeching voice.

Old Moll laughed.

"In good time you shall see him. In good time we will have the testimony of the Honorable Richard. But spare yourself needless alarm. You have only to speak the truth fearlessly, and it cannot injure, while it may greatly benefit you. Mr. Philip Leigh, on second thoughts, I shall be glad to accept your proffered hospitality. I intended to proceed to a lawyer's office; but if you have no objection, I will take the lawyer up, and proceed with this party to your house."

"I like the idea better. A dusty office is scarcely the place for Genevieve," answered Philip.

So it happened that the new housekeeper, whom Philip had secured a few weeks before the accident, for his charming little "Ivy Lodge," as he had christened it, as she sat at the large bay window, sewing, was startled by seeing this coach full of passengers deposited at her door.

She was a singular-looking woman, dressed more like a nun than the fashionable lady people of her class were apt to attempt. A dark brown merino dress, made perfectly plain, saving for a cape which

took the place of a shawl, and half concealed her figure, a plain, snow-white muslin cap, coming almost to her forehead, only just revealing a glimpse of dark hair put back as far as possible. A pale sad face, with dark circles under the eyes, which spoke of either ill health or secret tears. With the eyes themselves, one in her presence a long while might still be unacquainted, for the drooping lids were seldom raised.

A hasty glance showed her the youthful owner of the Lodge, and supposing he had recovered enough to bring guests, she rose hastily to speak with Dickson who led the way.

Dickson gave her his master's orders, and she hastened to set the other servants to execute them, and so was not present when the party was ushered into the drawing-room. She came in quietly in response to Philip's summons, and was introduced in a general manner, and sat down immediately in the obscure seat beneath the drapery of the deep window.

Genevieve was talking eagerly with Old Moll, and scarcely turned her head, only catching a careless glance of a gray dress, and snow-white cap. But Madame Heckler, the housekeeper, after a sudden sharp glance at the sweet girlish face, pressing her hand against her side, sank into her seat, grown ghastly pale.

The lawyer, at a signal from the policeman, rose deliberately, and holding a little slip of paper in his hand, at which he now and then glanced lightly, thus addressed the kidnapped clergyman:

"Are you willing to give your testimony as regards a circumstance with which you are acquainted, in behalf of a client of mine?"

"Certainly," answered the American minister, promptly, looking immensely relieved.

"You will understand that your testimony is to be taken down before all these witnesses, so you will be strictly accurate in your statements. The matter is of somewhat ancient date. You were in Sicily in the winter of 18—, seventeen years ago, in the town of —, near Palermo?"

"I was," was the prompt reply.

"Your name then was John Maclean, your profession that of a clergyman. You belonged to Scotland—came from near Edinburg."

"All of which is strictly true," responded the reverend gentleman.

"Did you perform any ceremony in your capacity as clergyman while in Sicily?" continued the lawyer, tapping the paper significantly, and looking straight into the face of the witness.

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

CAPTURED BY BUSHWHACKERS.: And how Providence Delivered me.

QUAD, M

Ballou's Monthly Magazine (1866-1893); Jun 1874; 39, 6; American Periodicals

pg. 563

CAPTURED BY BUSHWHACKERS.

And how Providence Delivered me.

BY M. QUAD OF THE MICHIGAN PRESS.

I AM ready to admit that it is an uncomfortable feeling to stand and look into the muzzle of a six-shooter, held by the hand of a bushwhacker or highwayman, but there is a feeling still more uncomfortable—that of standing on a barrel, a noose around your neck, and expecting to have your support kicked from under you. It is a sensation which one will never forget. You see I have encountered both six-shooter and bushwhackers, and have experienced both sensations alluded to.

In April, 1862, when the army of General Banks was at Harrisonburg, in the valley, fighting Jackson's forces one week, and running away from them the next, I was serving with a brigade quartermaster, having been detailed from my regiment for that purpose. We had had considerable trouble about supplies for several days previous to the incident which I shall relate,

particularly in the matter of forage. To increase our short supply of hay for the cavalry horses, instructions had been issued to the quartermaster to forage on the neighboring country. The people about Harrisonburg, or nine-tenths of them, claimed to be Union in sentiment, and perhaps some of them were. Might had not yet come to be looked upon as right by the government, as in after years, and so there were additional instructions for the quartermasters to give certificates to such farmers as were willing, or as were obliged, to part with hay and corn.

My brigade was encamped on the Strasburg Road, about two miles from the town, and on the 23d I was ordered by the quartermaster to take command of a small squad of cavalry which was going out with three wagons after forage. At that time, Jackson had been driven into the Blue

Ridge, defeated and demoralized, it was thought, and it was not believed that a uniformed Confederate could be found within five miles of the town in any direction. The cavalry had reconnoitered the country, without finding so much as a bushwhacker, and I had not the least thought of danger as we passed through the town and bore off to the left, to strike a section of the country not yet gone over. The cavalry were armed as usual, but the soldiers and teamsters looked upon the affair as an excursion, and refused to believe that we should meet with anything worse than a "secesh" farmer's sullen countenance.

Riding along at an easy trot, the heavy wagons rattling and jolting along behind, we passed over a distance of about four miles, and then drew up at the promise of forage from a barn on the left. Being in charge, and having orders to take nothing by force where a certificate would procure it, I rode down to the house to consult with the farmer. He met me at the gate, having caught sight of us, and suspecting what the wagons meant, and he at once informed me that he could spare nothing. He did not care for a certificate, was as arrogant as a duke, and took no pains to conceal the fact that he was a firm advocate of the Confederate cause. So far as his sentiments went, I did not care a straw. He had as much right to be a Confederate as I had to be a Federal, and was undoubtedly honest and sincere in his belief. But he had hay, and hay was what we were after. If he did not want a voucher, I would take his hay without leaving one.

Riding back to the men, we threw down the bars, drove the teams into the yard, and threw open the barn doors to find that the farmer had at least four or five tons of good hay in the building. His stock could now pasture, and if we robbed him of every pound of the fodder, he would not feel it. The men went to work and loaded up two of the wagons, taking not more than a ton, and we then concluded to load the other wagon with corn. There were not five bushels on the farm, and we must go further up the road for it.

While the wagons were driven to the road, a young man about seventeen years old, and somewhat deformed, came limping up to me, and wanted to know if we wanted to buy some corn. On being answered

in the affirmative, he replied that his brother, who lived about two miles up the road, had several hundred bushels, and, being a Union man, would not object to parting with a load. There was something about the young man's appearance which I did not like. His eyes refused to meet mine, he had a sneaking look, and I felt a strong aversion to him. However, as there was no good reason for my disgust, further than what I could see, I repressed the feeling, and told him that we would pay his brother a visit. This decision being arrived at, he limped away, and then we got the wagons into the road.

Having secured the hay, it was as well to let the teamsters go back to the village as to wait for the other wagon to load. And as we had met with nothing to lead us to believe that there were any Confederate soldiers or bushwhackers in the neighborhood, I allowed three of the cavalrymen to go back with the wagon. The rest of us rode on up the road, thinking that the finding and loading of the corn would be a matter of no account. We jogged along at a fair pace, the weather being splendid, and the road in good order, and at length arrived at the house described. There was a barn, a stack of hay, two corn cribs, and the dwelling was twenty or thirty rods beyond. The country about was cut up with ravines, and was pretty well covered with timber a short distance back from the road.

While the soldiers tore down the fence and drove in close to one of the well-filled cribs, I rode on down to the house. Hitching my horse at the gate, I rapped at the door, and in answer to my inquiries, a gentle spoken woman answered that her husband was at the barn. She seemed frightened or nervous, but I thought she apprehended personal violence, and went off toward the barn to seek the farmer.

The teamster was on his saddle, the cavalrymen sat their horses, and I was within ten rods of them, when half a dozen men, well armed, suddenly leaped out of one of the cribs and opened fire on the men. The two parties were not over three rods apart, and how man or horse escaped annihilation from the sudden volley is more than I can account for. The bushwhackers were between me and the soldiers, and I halted as I saw them. The smoke of their guns had not cleared away when I heard the shout of the teamster,

the bang of his wagon, and then the shouts of the cavalrymen. When I caught sight of them again, all were galloping down the road. But as I looked, the soldiers halted, having recovered from their surprise, and in a moment more they opened fire with their carbines, sending in so much lead that the farmers ran behind the crib for shelter.

No one had thus far paid me any attention. Completely surprised, I stood there like a statue, watching the actions of both parties. However, when the cavalrymen opened fire, I began to see my situation, and my first thought was to gain my horse. I had just turned to run, when some one leaped upon me, another one seized my legs, and in a moment I was struggling on the grass, with two bushwhackers holding me down. I could not get at my revolver, but I kicked and struck, and might, perhaps, have thrown them off, but for the sight of a bowie-knife before my eyes.

"Now just give one more kick, and you will get this clear up to the handle!" said one of them, pressing the point of the knife to my breast until it drew blood.

I ceased to struggle, and after a moment the man removed the knife, and ordered me to hold up my hands that he might tie them. They both rose up as he spoke, and the next second I was on my feet, determined to escape, if such a thing were possible. Striking out in the confusion, I knocked one of the men flat, but the other one had his revolver within two inches of my eye, and shouted:

"If you make another move, I'll shoot you."

"Shoot him down! Shoot him, anyhow!" yelled the other man, as he struggled up, at the same time trying to possess himself of the revolver.

"No—keep back, Sam—keep away—we can do better than to waste a cartridge on him!"

I was then ordered to put my hands behind my back, and while one kept the revolver at my face, the other tied my arms. During all this time the bushwhackers and the cavalry had been skirmishing, one of the former being killed by a ball in the head, but now the soldiers slackened fire, remounted their horses and rode off, probably intending to come back with a sufficient force to clean out the guerrilla gang. As they rode away, the bushwhackers

came running down to me, and for five minutes I was roughly treated, each man feeling himself licensed to kick me until he was weary.

When through with their sport, one of the men started to take possession of my horse. As he came near, the animal suddenly pulled back, the strap parted, and the horse went down the road on a keen run.

"Confound the luck!" exclaimed the man, who appeared to be the leader of the gang. "There goes a clean three hundred dollars, saying nothing of Joe Harvey lying up there with an ounce ball in his brain-box!"

"What in the d—l are we going to do with this cussed Yankee, now that we've got him?" inquired another.

"O, he wont bother us long!" replied the leader. "We've got to git from here right smart. The Yanks will be down here by the acre in less than an hour, and we'd better be jogging. Keep the Yank between you, and come along."

We passed the crib, and the body just beyond it, reached the barn, and then started straight for the woods. The men boasted a good deal about their victory over the cavalry, but as the odds had been two to one in favor of the bushwhackers, even the boasters at length seemed to conclude that it was no great victory, after all. The face of one of the men looked familiar to me, and as we passed along he noticed that I was observing him. He began laughing, slapped his leg, and at length exclaimed:

"You Yanks are pretty cute, but there are cuter ones. Didn't I bait the trap and lead you into it nicely!"

He was the lame young man who had met me at the other farm and told the story about the corn. He was no longer lame, his face had a different look, and I could see that the whole affair had been a ruse to deceive us. Viewing it in this light was anything but consolation. I had heard of the bushwhackers and their atrocious deeds too often to feel that they would now give me any sort of chance for my life, much less hold me a prisoner of war. This class of men was despised by all true Confederate soldiers, especially by Confederate officers. They would not enlist, defied provost marshals, and were banded together to rob and murder whenever they could get opportunity, not always

particular on which side the victim belonged. I have spoken of this gang as guerrillas, but should not have done so. The guerrillas of the war were soldiers at times, and none of them could be charged with cowardice.

The owner of the farm did not accompany us further than the barn, and I heard him say that he would dispose of the body, and remain to tell the coming soldiers a satisfactory story. I was the only witness who could testify that he had been engaged in the fight, and they intended to seal my mouth. With a part of the gang walking before and part behind me, we travelled through woods, over hills, up ravines, and finally came out on a road. It did not seem to be a thoroughfare, and yet there were indications of travel. I was so completely turned around that I could not get the points of the compass, nor could I tell the time of day. I judged, however, that it was about three o'clock. We crossed the road, went about forty rods, passing through a lot and turning a thicket, and came upon a loghouse. The window sash had been removed, and boards nailed over all the windows except one, and the house had more the appearance of a blockhouse than a dwelling.

"Nobody been here," remarked the leader of the gang, turning over a small piece of board lying near the step, and examining it for the sign which had been agreed upon.

"Well, shall we wait?" inquired one of the men, as they all stood about me.

"No," replied the leader. "You remember that we are to meet at Hull's farm to-night. We have got time for a cup of coffee, and then we'll be off."

The door was unfastened; we all went in, and I saw a room about twenty feet square, having no furniture whatever. A large fireplace occupied half of one end, a quantity of straw was piled up in the other, and a frying-pan and a kettle were on the hearth. Everything went to show that the gang existed as a gang, and did not owe its entire strength to the farmers who now and then took part with it. Not one of the men was in uniform, not one was armed with army weapons, and it was quite easy to divine that the Confederate service did not control the movements of the organization.

A fire was started, coffee made, and the

men brought out provisions from a box, and had a hearty luncheon. I had been ordered to sit down in a corner, and received no attention until after the meal was over, when one of the men threw the frying-pan at my head, and asked if I would like a cup of coffee. Feeling the need of it, I replied in the affirmative, when he roared out:

"Of course you would, you d—d Yankee dog! But you won't get no coffee here. We are going to send you where they don't drink coffee."

His companions laughed loudly at the remark, and then they began discussing my case. They did not lower their voices in the least, but probably intended that I should hear every word. None of them had the remotest idea of allowing me to live beyond the morrow, and at least two were in favor of hanging me right away. The leader was not one of these two, he contending that the balance of the gang would be on hand by next day, and then all could enjoy the "fun" together. After a few minutes spent in discussing the question, it was decided to "keep me over" until next day, and they began preparations to leave.

"Here, who's to stay here and watch him?" suddenly inquired one of the men, seeming to have forgotten the matter before..

"By George! I'd forgotten all about that," replied the leader, appearing puzzled. "Here, Saul, I guess you'd better stop. It will be easier than tramping twenty miles."

"I don't want to stay with him," replied Saul, moving toward the door. Two others repeated his words, and that took all but the leader.

"Confound him! let's hang him and have him out of the way," exclaimed Saul, giving me a wicked look. The leader was at first opposed to the scheme, but when there were three against him, he remarked that it might as well be done one time as another, and they entered into preparations.

Although deeply interested in the conversation, as may be supposed, I had not opened my lips in my own defence, having hopes that if left with one of the gang, I might make my escape. Though I entertained no hope that they would spare me, I now addressed them, asking that the ex-

ecution might be delayed till the morrow, if no longer. I might as well have appealed to hyenas. They only mocked me, and went on with their preparations. One of the men brought out a rope, proceeded to a tree about five rods from the house, made one end fast to a limb, and then another one rolled a barrel from behind the house under the tree. I had been an anxious observer of these proceedings, but did not protest against them. Knowing that they were now looking to see me display some sign of weakness or cowardice, I made up my mind to die game.

"Well, Mister Yank, things begin to look sulphurous fur you!" remarked the leader, pointing to the barrel and the swinging rope.

"Hadn't you as soon shoot me as to hang me up like a murderer?" I asked, preferring the quicker and less painful method.

"No sir—e—not by a long shot!" he replied, laughing, as if much pleased. "It will be fun to see you kick and struggle—to see your eyes bulge out, your tongue hang down, your face grow as black as my old hat here! I have been looking you over, and I believe you will kick and fight about ten minutes before giving it up. We'll swing you off easy, so as not to break your neck and spoil the fun."

What use to appeal to the mercy of such men—men with hearts of stone, and worse? They all laughed loudly at the remarks of the leader, and then I was conducted to the barrel.

"Lift him up!" commanded the leader; "and be careful that you fix the rope so that he wont choke on the start, as that fellow did up at Winchester!"

I was lifted upon the barrel, which was so old and weak that it could scarcely sustain my weight, and then one of the men adjusted the noose, the rope being drawn over the limb until there was not an inch of slack.

"You can pray if you like," remarked the leader, as they all drew back, "but you must cut it mighty short. Our time is valuable, and we have got to be going as soon as you have stopped kicking."

There were two or three minutes of silence, and then he announced that my time was up. My arms were yet as they had fastened them, the rope was ready, and they had only to kick the barrel away.

They expected that my death struggles would afford them rare sport, but I made up my mind to cheat them. I planned to leap as high in the air as possible, as the leader approached to kick the support away, and hoped that the fall would dislocate my neck and end my sufferings at once.

The moment came. The man approached. I drew a long breath, and gathered my muscles for the leap, when suddenly there came to us from the road the report of a rifle, followed by shouts and the reports of two revolvers.

"Yanks! by heavens!" shouted the leader; and they all faced about. There was another revolver shot, more shouting, and two minutes after a bushwhacker came through the thicket on the jump.

"What's up?" "what's up?" the men shouted, as the new-comer joined them, panting like a horse after a hard race.

"Yanks down there!" he replied, pointing toward the road. "Seven of them came riding along, and I was just mad enough to give 'em a shot. They have halted at the fence, and I guess they'll ride in here."

The rope was slackened, I was hustled down from the barrel, pushed into the house, a man ordered to guard me and keep me quiet, and then the door was shut, and I heard the bushwhackers running away. I laid down on the straw, my guard put his eye to a small loophole, and half an hour passed without alarm. At the end of that time one of the gang returned, and told the guard that the cavalry had gone on, and that the men were going off to the appointed meeting, as at first intended.

"That means that I've got to stay here all night and look after you," growled the man; "but you needn't expect to come any of your tricks over me. I'll shoot you if you so much as look me in the face!"

Thankful for the respite, I believed that I could obey the order to keep my eyes off the man's villainous countenance. He went and sat down by the fire; I stretched out for a rest, and when night settled down we had not exchanged a word. My arms pained me terribly, being tightly bound, but I knew that my condition would not be improved by him, and so suffered in silence. When it was fairly dark, the man began to grow communicative. He asked me many

questions, answered those which I put, and his nature seemed to have undergone a complete change. I was careful in what I said, and allowed him to boast without contradicting his gross assertions—in fact, agreeing with him in everything he said.

He gave me a drink of water, and promised that in the morning he would untie my arms and give me some provision.

Had my hands been tied, I might have worked them loose; but it was my arms, and the cords would not give in the least. I could not assault him, could not dodge him, could not escape by flight, and he knew it. As the night came on, the weather grew sultry, the atmosphere felt damp, and I realized that we were to have a storm. It was too warm for a fire, there were no lights, and so the guard threw open the door, and sat down on the sill, stretching his legs across, and holding his rifle on his lap. He seemed nervous, and when not conversing with me, was whistling and singing. I asked him if he was going to pass the night on the step, and he replied that after the storm he would come in, light a fire, and shut the door.

For the next hour only an occasional word passed between us. I racked my brain for some plan to outwit him, but I could think of none. If I could get my arms free—it was that “if” which stood in the way. It would be sheer folly to attempt anything unless my arms were at liberty, and even then the odds were against me. So I pondered, planned, discussed, and was foiled at every turn.

At length the storm broke. There was a flash of lightning, a sullen roar, and then the rain came down. The man moved in to escape the wet, but did not close the door. After the first ten minutes the

flashes were so constant that I could see the guard's face nearly all the time. The lightning seemed to strike quite near us once or twice, and the thunder was so heavy that the house trembled from floor to roof.

I at length became somewhat nervous, and shut my eyes that I might not see the vivid lightning. A minute after I heard the man get up, seize the door to shut it, and then there came an awful crash, a noise as if the building had been hurled against the rocks. I felt as if some one had jabbed me with ten thousand needles, then a benumbed feeling came, and then I heard a heavy body fall to the floor. It was full five minutes before I could get upon my feet, and when I did I saw that one end of the house had been torn out. A flash showed me the body of the bushwhacker lying on his back on the floor, his face horribly burned. The storm was at its height, but I plunged out into the darkness, and after a hundred stumbles and falls gained the road. Taking the direction which I thought would lead me toward Harrisonburg, and having only the flashes to light my way, I walked, ran, stumbled, and made progress for about an hour, when I was halted by a scouting party from the Union army, and returned to life and liberty. At daylight next morning the party pushed on to the cabin, and found matters as I have described, the bushwhacker being cold in death. While we halted at the house, the gang returned, and during the fight which ensued four of the rascals, including the leader, were laid out by the Federals, and my revenge was all that could have been desired by any captive.